

NATION 19 OCT 1999

Afghan Opp recaptures 2 key districts

KABUL (AFP) - Anti-Taliban forces recaptured two key districts in north-eastern Takhar province in a pre-dawn attack and seized access to a vital supply route on the Tajik border, the Afghan opposition said Monday.

Forces loyal to commander Ahmad Shah Masood retook Khwaja Ghar and Hazarbagh districts to the north of Takhar, 400 kilometers (240 miles) north of Kabul in Monday's counter attack, opposition spokesman Mohammad Habel said.

The new gains restored access for Masood to a badly needed supply route on the Oxus river at the Ai Khanum crossing point into neighbouring Tajikistan, he said.

The opposition forces captured 'all parts of Hazarbagh and Khwaja Ghar,' Habel said.

The Taliban troops have 'retreated to Dasht-i-Archi district in Kunduz and we are chasing them,' he said in a satellite telephone call from Takhar's provincial capital of Taloqan.

The fighting was heavy but the Taliban soldiers, fearing capture, withdrew without much resistance amid a multi-pronged opposition attack, the spokesman added.

The fighting which started late Sunday was still continuing, Habel added. No independent confirmation of the gains was immediately available.

The ruling Taliban, which controls

most of Afghanistan, had captured the two strategic towns late September during their well-prepared autumn offensive to dislodge Masood supporters from the northeastern regions of Afghanistan. 'It is a significant gain against the Taliban who had intended to overrun the whole Takhar province and capture the adjacent Badakhshan in a matter of two days,' Habel said.

Afghan factions claim capturing towns

KABUL, Oct 27: Afghan opposition forces claimed capturing several towns after a heavy overnight assault on the Taliban in the northern province of Samangan, opposition officials said on Wednesday.

General Sayed Hussain Anwari, of the anti-Taliban United Front, said the opposition alliance captured Safed Kotal, Chabchal, Dehi, Maqsood and Keshendeh in the key provincial valley of Darra-i-Sauf.

"The enemy was completely routed from Darra-i-Sauf," said Anwari by satellite telephone from an opposition base in northern Afghanistan.

He said fighting was now going on around Sholgara district adja-

cent to Balkh province.

Anwari said fighters from alliance members Jamiat-i-Islami, Harakat-i-Islami, and Wahdat-i-Islami participated in the attack.

Darra-i-Sauf valley, 200kms north of Kabul, is surrounded by mountains overlooking a parallel road between Bamiyan and Balkh provinces, both held by the Taliban.

Mohammad Muhaqeq, a top official of the Wahdat-i-Islami, said the Taliban had been pushed back 80 kilometres deep inside Balkh.

"These gains are very important," he said, adding the enemy no longer had any base in Darra-i-Sauf. —AFP

DAWN

20 OCT 1999

Former Afghan minister presents peace formula

From Shamim Shahid

PESHAWAR—Former Afghan Minister and Chief of the Ghauri nationality, Abdul Qadar Imami has presented a comprehensive formula for resolving the 20-year long conflict which is possible only through ensuring just right of self-determination to the war-affected people.

In fact, since 1973 Afghanistan had been facing a leadership crisis Imami remarked in a detailed interview with daily *The Nation* at his residence at Hayatabad Peshawar.

Imami, who remained in three different regimes on the basis of his popularity among the Ghauri nationality, said that almost all existing leaders are imposed by others. He was of the firm belief that Afghan conflict could easily be resolved whenever the masses get their just right of self-determination. Highlighting salient features of his approach towards the Afghan Conflict, Abdul Qadar Imami said first of all people from each and every district should be asked to nominate their representative to the provincial council. In each district, majority of people either belong to same community and tribe and they instead of political, ideological and military affiliations would select one among them in the light of his background.

Abdul Qadar Imami said that through this exercise each and every national-

ity and tribe could be in a better position to get a chance of leading the country.

The 20-year long experience has proved that Afghans couldn't assemble on one forum. Through such tradi-



Abdul Qadar Imami talking to *The Nation*.

tional norms and procedures, they could also follow the realistic approach of reconciliation and mutual consultations in resolving of their internal issues, he remarked.

Elaborating his point of view, he said that in all over Afghanistan, the mediators and volunteers of the United

Nations and Organisation of Islamic Countries are respected by the people and such people can visit each and every locality. He added that such mediators first approach the people from each district and province and later declare Kabul or any other important city and town a demilitarised zone.

Referring to the role of former king Mohammad Zahir Shah, Abdul Qadar Imami said that he is considered a true Afghan and patriotic and he can play a key role in resolving the conflict.

In response to a question, Abdul Qadar Imami said that events taking place in Afghanistan since 1973 visualise that no one can govern that country through forcible ways nor the foreign countries could run (Afghanistan) affairs through imposed rulers. In this connection, he said that all those who intend to impose puppet regimes in Afghanistan must take a lesson from the former British colonial rulers.

Abdul Qadar Imami said that interests of Pakistan and Afghanistan are inter-linked. In favour of his idea, Imami said that Pakistan can easily establish a consumer markets for its products in Central Asia.

Likewise, Pakistan can utilise natural resources of Central Asian Republics for meeting the energy crisis. He also added that Afghans are also determined to safeguard interests of Pakistan.

Closure of Afghan Varsity puts students in trouble

From Shamim Shahid

PESHAWAR—Due to lack of funds and resources, the Peshawar-based Afghan Refugees Commissionerate is unable to reopen the Afghan University in the city which is the lone source of higher education for the war-affected Afghan youngsters.

The Afghan University at Peshawar was established several months back by the Afghan Refugees Commissionerate with the collaboration of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). This institution was established with a view to provide equal and similar education facilities to the Afghan students who are unable to get such facilities.

Earlier in June 1998, the NWFP government taking a serious notice of mushroom growth of Afghan educational institutions in private sector, had ordered their closure. Later the govern-

ment agreed establishment of a single institution with a view to provide equal and unanimous educational facilities to the youngsters.

Besides, the UNHCR a number of other foreign countries and donor agencies had promised of providing funds and help for functioning of such an institution. But later on almost all these circles turned down their promises.

However, later the Afghan Refugees Commissionerate, a semi-government institution for meeting expectations of the Afghan youngsters established the University in previous April. Despite internal strangle pulling among the Afghan leadership establishment of such a University was declared a big achievement of the Afghan Refugees Commissionerate.

Before going to start the institution, Gulzar Khan Commissioner Afghan Refugees had held meetings not only with the Afghan intellectuals and pub-

lic opinion makers but also with high ranking UNHCR and UNESCO officials in a bid to ensure education to all.

Now, when all the educational institutions had resumed functions on completion of the summer vacations there is no chances of reopening of the Afghan University. In this connection, Gulzar Khan Commissioner Afghan Refugees when approached confirmed that they lacked resources. He said that salaries of the teachers and other employees are pending for the last three months. "I don't see reopening of the university in the near future," was reply of Gulzar Khan when questioned that whether they expect funds and resources from the donor countries.

It may be mentioned here that the closure of the lone Afghan University at Peshawar has not only snatched livelihood sources for hundreds of the intellectual families but even it has deprived thousands of students of education opportunities.

FRONTIER POST

05 OCT 1990

Mass grave found in Afghanistan

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR - A mass grave with 600 human skeletons has been found in remote area of Pash, Kanda in Helmand province, an Afghan source revealed here on Tuesday.

The source told The Frontier Post here on Tuesday that a mass grave was discovered by a resident of Wardag province, who accidentally came across the heap of human skeletons while searching for his missing relative.

The first mass grave was discovered few years back in Dashed Laila, where bodies of thousands of student militia were found.

The Taliban authorities were immediately informed about the discovery, said the source. However, the authorities least interested in launching probe into the mass grave, added the source. Taliban have unearthed a gang of 10 criminals, headed by commander Haji Khaleefa who is suspected to be involved in this barbaric act, claimed the source, requesting anonymity.

Haji Khaleefa was also reportedly involved in raping women and killing innocent children, disclosed the source.

The commander was transferred to Dushan Ullaswaili (district) to Shaljee a few months back by the Taliban high-ups.

said the source. Khaleefa, who was arrested few weeks ago, reportedly confessed to his crimes. He is in Qandahar prison's Ward No 4.

The Taliban authorities have recovered goods worth billion of afghanis from his residence as well.

Haji Khaleefa usually kill the people after looting them. Their bodies were secretly buried in the Pash Kanda, said the source.

AFP adds from Kabul: Fresh fighting erupted Tuesday between the ruling Taliban regime and opposition forces to control of the northern Afghan city of Taloqan, an opposition official said.

"Heavy fighting broke out early Tuesday in the Aghial mountains where control changed several times. Fighting is continuing now in the mountains, which is a key position," he said.

Earlier, a spokesman for the opposition United Front in Taloqan said an attack by the ruling Taliban was imminent as the militia tried one last push to dislodge the opposition forces before winter set in.

The ruling militia launched the second wave of its summer offensive 11 days ago aimed at taking Taloqan and taking control of the province, and severing supply routes to opposition bases. Initially, the militia captured

surrounding districts and advanced to within 25 kilometres of Taloqan from the north, west and south west but the fighting stalled with neither side making further gain.

Fighting was also hampered by the weather, with snow and freezing rain indicating winter would set in earlier than usual.

"They are disappointed as they did not achieve their main aim which was to take Taloqan," United Front's spokesman Mohammad Habel said.

The Taliban made a tremendous effort to take Taloqan during the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly" last week in New York, he said.

Traders condemn ban on Afghan Transit Trade

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - The two leading figures of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industries and stalwarts of the Frontier Customs Agents have denounced the federal government's recent decision regarding restriction, on the Afghan Transit Trade, and added that it could cause millions of rupees losses.

In a joint Press statement on Thursday, the SCCI executive Committee member Zia Ul Haq Sarhadi who is also Patron-in-Chief of the Frontier Customs Agent and President Syed Kaleem Abbas Sheerazi have said that unrealistic approach of the government billion of rupees losses.

Now Nawaz Sharif government had multiplied grievances of the traders and losses to the national exchequer by imposing a ban on 40 more items. As a result of such steps, the present government had closed the chapter of Afghan Transit Trade.

Mr. Sarhadi and Sheerazi said that instead of imposing ban on Afghan Transit Trade, the government needs to take steps for tightening security on the geographical borders of the country. They were of the firm belief that government's decision regarding imposition on Afghan Transit trade would affect this province. Similarly, they added that it could enhance deficit of Karachi Port Trust and Pakistan Railway. They suggested the government to withdraw such a decision.

Afghan leader survives bomb attack

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - Abdul Salam Mohmand, a former high ranking officer of Afghanistan has survived bomb attack by unknown persons near Nadar Khan Keley in Khyber Agency.

The reports from Khyber Agency reveal that Abdul Salam Mohmand who was Deputy Chief of the Government Printing Press at Kabul during the regime of late Dr. Najib Ullah due to threats to his life at Peshawar, shifted to the refugees hamlet near Malik Nadar Khan Keley some two kilometers from Landi Kotal. However, a few days ago, some persons felted explosive materials at his relatives house. The explosive material went off with a big bang but no loss was reported.

As a result of such attack, uncertainty is being found among the Afghan refugees. Salam Mohmand was considered one among the active leader of former ruling Watan Party of late Dr. Najib Ullah.

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Gen. Musharraf's statement an encouraging development

Coalition govts can't solve Afghan imbroglio

From Shamim Shahid

PESHAWAR - Dr Aman Ullah Rasool has said that the experiences of coalition governments in Afghanistan have failed therefore, the mediators and neighbouring countries need to help the peace-loving Afghans in formation of a broad-based representative government which could ensure return of complete peace and tranquillity.

"Gen. Pervez Musharraf, new Chief Executive of Pakistan has made happy the war-affected Afghans that formation of a broad-based representative government in Afghanistan was a must," Dr Aman Ullah Rasool, chief of the Afghan Community for Peace and National Unity remarked this in an interview to *The Nation*. He was of the firm belief that Pakistan could further enhance its image and credibility among the Afghans by early implementing Chief Executive's policy statement on Afghanistan. In response to a question, Dr Aman Ullah Rasool said that such a realistic proposal of Gen. Pervez Musharraf could easily be materialised through convening a meeting of the traditional Loya Jirga. Elaborating his point further, the Afghan intellectual said that Loya Jirga is not only considered a grand representative assembly of Afghans but each and every Afghan honour its decisions.

He recalled that in past, the previous Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had brokered a coalition government of the *jehadic* leaders in 1992 last but such a government instead of meeting wishes

and expectations of the Afghans, had pushed them into an era of a civil war-like situation. As a result of such an unrealistic decision, the Afghans had suffered a lot and now deserve to be in peace and honour in their motherland.

Dr Aman Ullah Rasool who had recently returned after a detailed visit, said that his community members are scattered in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Holland and other European countries. In this connection, he along with a detailed tour of such countries had also presided over several rounds of meetings in Germany. He added that in these meetings, he had exchanged views with his colleagues and supporters on a three-point formula of former King Mohammad Zahir Shah."

Unfortunately, almost all the Afghans have a same idea about a negotiated solution to the conflict but they are reluctant to join each other on a single table for implementation of such idea, he remarked. In this connection, he added that he held detailed talks with his like minded colleagues and friends on the eve of his recent visit to various European countries. Likewise, he was planning to hold negotiations with Taliban leaders to pave the ways and means for assembling maximum of the Afghans on one forum for building up a consensus. He was of the firm belief that whenever the Afghans sit across a table then they could easily resolve their internal conflicts.

Answering to a question, Dr Aman Ullah Rasool said that since a long he had been insisting on involvement of

Pakistan in the peace efforts. In this connection, he time and again had asked the United Nations and other forums to take first Pakistan into confidence and later on go ahead with implementation of a formula which ensures establishment of a broad-based representative government in Afghanistan. Similarly, he said that Taliban also needs to become accommodative and realise needs of establishment of a broad-based representative government in Afghanistan.

He said that each and every Afghan is bound to speed up efforts for rebuilding and reconstruction of the war-damaged Afghanistan which is possible only after establishment of an acceptable centralised authority in that country. Taliban need not to become narrow minded but they need to let the experienced, capable and competent people of playing their due role in restoration of the war-damaged infrastructure of Afghanistan.

In response to a question, Dr Aman Ullah Rasool said that after holding talks with the Taliban leaders, he was planning to hold similar talks with the Pakistani authorities, particularly with foreign affairs expert of the proposed National Security Council. He added that such negotiations could help him in ascertaining Pakistani authorities point of views on current situation of Afghanistan. He also said that through such steps, he could be in a better position to convince the Pakistani authorities about the importance of traditional *Loya Jirga* in formation of the broad-based representative government in Afghanistan.

Pak govt urged to help resolve Afghan issue

From Our Correspondent
PESHAWAR - Known Afghan intellectual and leading elder from Kunar province Mohammad Yaqoob Zamani has called upon new military rulers of Pakistan to help the peace-loving and patriotic Afghans in their efforts for restoration of peace and acceptable centralised authority in that country.

Mohammad Yaqoob Zamani who is Deputy in Peshawar-based Afghanistan Study Centre through a Press release issued here on Wednesday said that Afghanistan and Pakistan are not only neighbouring countries but even their people are linked up in historical blood, religious and cultural relations with each other. The Afghan intellectual further said that when uncertainty among the Pakistani people reached its peak, there fore, the armed forces fulfilled responsibilities and expectations of the people. Similarly, the war affected and peace-loving Afghans have the right to ask the military rulers to help in early return of peace in that war-affected country.

NATION 22 OCT 1993

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Moderate Afghans face life threats

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - In the wake of growing terrorism and narcotics trafficking, the western world is struggling to convince Taliban to revise their policies but they have left moderate Afghan politicians, intellectuals and others who desire a negotiated solution to the conflict simply duless.

Since invasion of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan, the mysterious killings of Afghans started in the region. But at that time, the Mujahideen and their supporters were secure in the neighbouring countries while the Communists and their subordinates have enjoyed whole hearted protection inside Afghanistan. At that time only the nationalist and secular minded Afghan politicians and intellectuals were target by those who were sponsoring terrorism. But after the end to the Cold War in 1992, the nationalists and progressive leaders were assassinated.

However, after the Taliban's victorious entry into Kabul in September 1996, the democrats, nationalists and Communists joined hands against Taliban for their safety and gaining power. Apart from others, those who were either demanding a negotiated solution to the conflict or favouring formation of a broad based representative government in their motherland were bitterly targeted. No one can ascertain that how many victimised have been since September 1996, but different reports re-

veals that number of such victims large. From common people to prominent leaders are included in the list. However, the world bodies like United Nations, Organisation of Islamic Countries and Amnesty International are playing role of silent spectators. Since establishment of Mujahideen government in general and Taliban government in particular, a large number of Afghans have filed applications to the United Nations and its affiliated agencies for the protection and security but they could not get any response. Even late Mohammad Hasham Khan Paktyani and Hasham Khan, first cousin of late President Dr. Najib Ullah were shot dead mysteriously 1998. However, recently the trend of mysterious killings has been changed. Apart from advocating in favour of a negotiated solution to the conflict, those who denouncing foreign interferences in affairs of their motherland are also facing threats to their lives away from Afghanistan. Such people are receiving anonymous telephonic calls and threats. Last year former Afghan President Prof. Sibghat Ullah Mujaddadi has not only denounced the policies of Taliban but alleged that Taliban are enjoying manpower support from Pakistan. Prof. Mujaddadi on third day of this statement flown to Denmark and still staying there for security.

Though Prof. Mujaddadi went to Denmark but his nears and dears are living in Peshawar and other parts of the country facing threats to their lives. Such

people are unable to take part in socio-political activities. Apart from other followers and supporters of Prof. Sibghat Ullah Mujaddadi, his sons are also facing threats and anonymous telephonic calls.

Abdul Salam Mohmand, former Deputy Chief of Afghan Government Printing Press due to frequent attacks on his life, a few days ago shifted to a refugees camp near to Malik Nadar Khan Keley at Landikotal. In fact, Salam Mohmand was a guest along with his wife and other family members with relatives but was threatened.

Similarly, Afghan journalist Mati Ullah Abid living from hand to mouth and working with local Pushto daily and is unable to stay for more than a month at one place or locality. Likewise is the position of former Afghan Diplomat at Quetta Mr. Humayoon Shinwari. Mr. Shinwari who is also affiliated with Afghan National Liberation Front of Prof. Sibghat Ullah Mujaddadi in the last one year had faced many attempts on his life. In fact, the local civil and police authorities are unable to keep in mind security of more than a million Afghans residing in the city. Only the Afghan Refugees Commissionerate is responsible to look after these refugees and the commissionerate is facing suspension of foreign aid. In such circumstances, the Afghans are only expecting steps for the security and protection of their lives from the United Nations and Organisation of Islamic Countries.

Afghanistan fears wheat shortage

KABUL, Oct 21: Afghan flour prices have risen sharply amid dwindling stocks after Pakistan's military authorities halted cross-border trade in the staple food following military takeover in Islamabad, market traders said on Thursday.

"Not a single truck crossed the border soon after the military takeover in Pakistan," Mohammad Ashoor, a local trader from Weish near the southern Afghan and Pakistan border, said.

He also said stocks were severely depleted in Weish, from where imported flour is usually trucked to other parts of Afghanistan.

"Before scores of trucks crossed into Afghanistan from Chaman in Quetta either legally or after paying the Pakistani border guards," he said.

But he added the border police have been replaced by much tougher military personnel since the October 12 military takeover which ousted the government of prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

A Pakistan military spokesman was unavailable for comment.

Local traders also said the Pakistan military had banned wheat flour imports across the Afghan frontier provinces of Kandahar and Khost which led to a 20 per cent jump in wheat flour prices in Kabul's markets.

In Kabul armed Taliban guarded the gate of the Baghi Qazi flour market ensuring individuals did not buy more than two sacks of flour while local bakers have been restricted to no more than five sacks.

A market official said there were

only 7,000 sacks each weighing 100 kilograms left in the market while the flour shortage was a cause for concern among Kabul's impoverished citizens. He said some people had already started hoarding flour.

"We report the situation regularly to the Kabul Municipality offices but to my knowledge nothing has been done yet," he added. Unless fresh imports arrived current flour stocks would last only a week in the capital, another trader said.

Just before the military takeover one sack cost 1,200,000 afghani (\$25) but the price has since risen to 1,530,000 (\$32), in a country where the average wage is five dollars a month.

"We can sort of manage with the prices, but we hope the flour does not disappear from the market," one buyer said.—AFP

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Polio vaccinations begin in Afghanistan

KABUL, Oct 25: The United Nations on Monday launched a vaccination campaign to immunize around 2.1 million children against polio in Afghanistan, although the warring parties failed to agree to a truce for the campaign, U.N. sources said.

"Neither of the two sides have accepted our truce appeal and we have begun the operation," a U.N. official said.

The three-day campaign will cover the whole of Afghanistan, about 90 per cent of which is controlled by the Taliban.

Taliban authorities have allowed aid agencies to fly vaccination equipment to the beleaguered Panjsher valley stronghold of main opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood north of Kabul and to the opposition-held mountainous region of the north-east, said Naqibullah Safi, a Taliban official.

Most of these areas were left out of an earlier vaccination programme as supplies could not reach there owing to fighting and a Taliban ban on flights to the opposition-held territory.

U.N. sources estimate around 45,000 volunteers and vaccinators will be involved in the vaccination campaign.

Safi said Afghanistan, which has one of the world's highest rates of child mortality by polio, would not eradicate polio totally until 2005 due to its difficult terrain and destruction of infrastructure by war. The U.N. target for eliminating the disease from the world is by the end of next year.

Children below the age of five are targeted in the current campaign, the second round this year. Thousands of children thronged to vaccination sites in Kabul, including mosques and public buildings.

FIGHTING RESUMES: Clashes between Taliban militia and the opposition alliance resumed on Monday after a week-long lull, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) agency reported.

It said eight people were killed and 12 others wounded in the fighting overnight and Monday morning. The two sides were continuing to exchange artillery fire, the Pakistan-based private news service reported.

The fighting resumed after forces of the Northern Alliance mounted an attack against the Taliban on the Bangi front in Takhar province, AIP said. AIP said Taliban forces repulsed the attack after four hours of fighting.—Reuters/dpa

Vaccination campaign in Afghanistan

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR — As many as six million doses of oral polio vaccines have been distributed in all over Afghanistan and 20,000 trained volunteers are ready to begin vaccinating children under the age of five years.

The UN report issued here on Friday has revealed that to encourage families to come out. The three-day campaign regarding polio vaccination is scheduled to begin on October 25 in accordance with the National Immunisation Day in Pakistan.

Giving further details of the campaign to be launched in the war-ravaged Afghanistan, the report states that in the first two rounds of campaign in May and June, the UNICEF and WHO managed to immunise 3.6 million children under the age of five against polio which is estimated 85 per cent under five population of that country.

The agencies estimate that around 0.6 million children from 20 districts couldn't immunised due to in-fighting between the warring factions.

This time, the UNICEF and WHO are struggling to cover these 0.6 million children and in this respect one month ago, the UN had appealed to both sides to observe a three-day ceasefire from October 25 to 27 enabling the trained volunteers of meeting their responsibilities. However, the UN is yet to get a response from both sides.

"With a ceasefire we would expect to vaccinate four million children. If it is not, we might not be able to reach children in parts of four provinces," said Louis George Arsenault, UNICEF representative for Afghanistan.

In most polio endemic countries, children receive two doses of the vaccine delivered at a one-month interval. Five high-risk countries, which include Afghanistan, Congo, Somalia, Southern Sudan and Angola, have redoubled efforts to try to eradicate the disease.

Ex-Afghan commander gunned down

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA, Oct 23: A former Afghan commander, Haji Ahmed Noorzai, was gunned down on Saturday in Chaman, a town at Pakistan-Afghan border some 120km north of here.

According to official sources, Noorzai, 40, was on his way to a local graveyard when two unidentified armed persons, riding a motorcycle, shot him with automatic weapons and killed him on the spot.

"Haji Ahmed Noorzai received eight bullets on different parts of his body and died on the spot," a senior official of the town administration told this correspondent

when contacted on telephone.

The levies (rural police) have registered a case against the unknown attackers and launched an operation for their arrest.

Noorzai, a well-known Afghan commander who had taken part in Afghan war against Russians in Kandhar region, shifted to Chaman after the formation of Taliban government in Kandhar and started his business.

"The cause of killing can be an old enmity between Haji Ahmed Noorzai and his opponents," the sources said and hoped that the killers would be arrested very soon.

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Meddling in Afghanistan to aggravate situation

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - Shehzada Masud, a leader of the great National United Islamic Front of Afghanistan has said that unless there is an end to foreign interference in Afghanistan, peace will remain a far cry, therefore, United Nations, Organisation of Islamic countries and others need to fulfill their responsibilities in this connection.

Through a Press release issued here on Saturday, Shehzada Masud said that the Afghans have been deprived of their just right of self-determination by a number of war mongers who are playing in hands of their foreign financiers and patronisers. Elaborating his point of view, he said that earlier, the former communists with support of the disbanded Soviet Union, later by Mujahideen and now Taliban have made hostages the majority of Afghans who desirous for return of peace and tranquility in their motherland. He was of the view that unless giving just right of self-determination to Afghans,

no one could resolve the conflict.

Taking advantages from internal rifts among the Afghans, Shehzada Masud said a number of regional, neighbouring and other countries for safeguarding its global interests have established their own channels in that war-affected Afghanistan.

Apart from fuelling the in-fighting in Afghanistan, such countries are also creating hurdles before the mediators, he added.

Due to such unrealistic attitude and policies of these foreign countries and forces, Afghanistan is facing civil war-like situation from the last two decades. He was of the view that now it is the high time for all of the foreign countries and forces to stop meddling in affairs of Afghanistan and let the Afghans resolve the conflict.

Diverting attention towards miseries of the Afghans, Shehzada Masud recalled that for preventing the former Soviets of their access to Indian Ocean, the Afghans had rendered unprecedented sacrifices. Around 1.5

million Afghans have embraced martyrdom. In the beginning, the Afghans were declared as a heroic nation by the west but when the America led western world materialised its long-awaited dream which is disintegration of the USSR, the heroic Afghans were left alone. He reminded that now Afghans are unable to stay in their motherland which had become a den of terrorism.

Shehzada Masud said that now majority of the Afghans have been dishearted of continue in-fighting in their motherland and they want an early return of peace. In this connection, he urged the United Nations and Organisation of the Islamic countries to help these peace-loving and democratic Afghans in convening of an emergency meeting of the traditional *Loya Jirga* for finding out a negotiated solution to the conflict. He was of the firm belief that only through such steps, the Afghan conflict could be resolved otherwise flames of war inside Afghanistan could spill over its geographical borders.

Negotiated solution to Afghan conflict stressed

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - Former Afghan minister and chief of Afghanistan Islamic Cultural and Research Centre Abdul Qadar Imami has urged all the neighbouring countries to help the peace-loving Afghans in convening an early meeting of the traditional *Loya Jirga* to find out a negotiated solution to the conflict.

In a Press release issued here on Thursday, Abdul Qadar Imami who belongs to central Ghor province of Afghanistan, has reminded that now each and every one is aware that in the last eight years, the Afghans had witnessed outcome of confrontation and hostilities among the warring factions. As a result of worst kind of destruction and genocide of the innocent and helpless civilians, now majority of the Afghans has realised importance of negotiations and mutual consultations.

Imami claimed that now almost all Afghans including jehadic and political leadership are favouring a negotiated solution to conflict. All of them support the idea of intra-Afghan negotiations and are ready for convening a meeting of the traditional *Loya Jirga* but without support and help of the neighbouring countries, such a task seems difficult. Elaborating his point of view, Imami

said that due to 20-year long fighting and bloodshed, Afghanistan and its people are dependent on neighbouring countries.

Similarly, the neighbouring countries have an influence in the war-devastated society. He was of the firm belief that with the help and support, the peace-loving Afghans could easily get their objectives which is a negotiated solution to the conflict.

While advocating in favour of a meeting of the traditional *Loya Jirga*, the former minister has further said that it had enabled the Afghans to get their just right of self-determination. In this connection, he said that the representatives selection process to *loya Jirga* must be held under the direct supervision of the UN and OIC teams. He was of the firm belief that through such a way, on one hand, the common Afghan could get participation in the decision making institutions of the country on one hand while on the other, the neighbouring countries could get rid of uncertain situation.

He said that neighbouring countries need to realise their responsibilities at this stage regarding an early solution to the conflict otherwise uncertain situation of Afghanistan could affect the global peace in general and regional peace in particular.

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Osama offers conditional exit from Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD(AFP) - Osama bin Laden has offered to conditionally leave Afghanistan in a letter to the ruling Taliban militia, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported Friday.

Bin Laden told Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar he was 'ready' to leave Afghanistan provided the Islamic militia 'undertook' to help him reach the place of his choice and promised secrecy about his intended destination, it said.

'I can reveal the name of the place to one or two people in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which should not give out this secret to anyone else,' AIP quoted bin Laden as saying in the letter.

A spokesman for Omar told AIP the Taliban supreme leader had replied that he would convey his response to bin Laden after consultations over the next three days, the report said.

Washington blames bin Laden for two bomb attacks last year against its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which more than 200 people were killed, including 12 Americans.

Soon after the bombings, the US carried out cruise missile strikes against bin Laden's suspected training camps inside Afghanistan.

The United Nations Security Council earlier this month told the Taliban it would impose sanctions if bin Laden were not extradited by November 14.

The Taliban, describing bin Laden as an Islamic hero and their honoured

guest, have so far refused to expel him.

But the newly appointed Taliban foreign minister, Wakil Ahmed Muttawakkel, said on Thursday (eds: correct) that his 'top priority' would be to improve strained relations with the United States and the Western world.

Muttawakkel took over as foreign minister in a major cabinet reshuffle by Omar, which analysts say was prompted by international isolation of the Islamic militia.

'The western world harbours a lot of suspicions about the Taliban. My main task will be to remove these misunderstandings,' Muttawakkel said.

He said a Taliban delegation at a recent meeting with US officials in Washington had explained that bin Laden's extradition was an Islamic issue and that Islamic scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and a third Muslim country should meet to find a solution.

The US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderfurth and the Taliban's New York-based representative Abdul Hakeem Mujahid met in Washington on Monday.

The focus of the meeting was on the bin Laden issue, State Department spokesman James Rubin said later. 'Various ideas about how to resolve our concerns in this area,' were discussed.

The spokesman said Washington did not necessarily expect a quick resolution of the matter. Before the Monday meeting Secretary of State Madeleine

See page

NATION

30 OCT 1999

Osama offers conditional exit from Afghanistan

From page 1

Albright stressed that discussions on recognising the militia would not progress unless the bin Laden issue was resolved.

'We've told them it will not be possible to make progress on these issues until Osama bin Laden is expelled from the Taliban-occupied territory to a place where he can be brought to justice,' she said.

Meanwhile, the United States on Friday reacted coolly to reports that Osama bin Laden had offered to leave Afghanistan, saying he could run but could not escape prosecution.

'Osama bin Laden can run from Afghanistan, but he cannot hide from our determination to seek justice,' State Department spokesman James Rubin said in a message to the exiled Saudi millionaire Washington suspects of masterminding last year's deadly attacks on

US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

'We will have a long, long memory,' Rubin added. 'He cannot hide from the long arm of the law.'

Earlier Friday, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported that bin Laden had offered to leave Afghanistan in a letter to the chief of the country's ruling Taliban militia provided they helped him reach a new destination and kept it a secret.

'I can reveal the name of the place to one or two people in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which should not give out this secret to anyone else,' AIP quoted bin Laden as saying in a letter to Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar.

The United States has placed a five million dollar bounty on bin Laden's head and the UN Security Council recently voted to impose sanctions on Afghanistan unless it expelled him by

November 14.

Washington has been in talks with Taliban officials on how best to deal with bin Laden who lives for the moment in that country as a guest of the government but no consensus has yet been arrived at.

The last such meeting occurred in Washington on Monday between Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderfurth and the Taliban's New York-based representative Abdul Hakeem Mujahid.

'They discussed various ideas about how to resolve our concerns in this area,' Rubin said after that meeting, referring to bin Laden.

He added, however, that Washington did not necessarily expect a quick resolution to the matter.

'Various ideas were discussed in that regard ... but I can't say we know what the outcome will be.'

NATION 04 OCT 1989

Afghans currency business in Peshawar

Thanks to Matiullah Abid for diverting attentions of the world towards another game being played with the Afghans who as a result of 20-year long imposed war in their motherland are facing worst kind of socio-economic problems. Since invasion of the former Soviet troops in Afghanistan, some 20 years back, the historical Chowk Yadgar of Peshawar has been converted into an international currency market. From US dollars to Pakistani Rupee and Afghanistan's Afghani are being sold and purchased in this market but its overall business is dominated by the currency of war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Like other national assets and heritages, Afghani has also witnessed world record fluctuation in its value in the last 20 years. At once 100 Afghani were equal to Rs 25 but now 1,000 Afghani are less than Rs 2.00. Similarly, as a result of fighting in Afghanistan when each and every lord has established his own monarch with own law, same is the conditions of Afghan currency. Though the Jihadic leaders have

refrained themselves from printing their own currency but war lord Gen. Rashid Dostam and his rivals, Talibans have introduced their own currency. Such currency notes along with that printed by former king Mohammad Zahir Shah and his successor Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan is still acceptable. The previous communist rulers right from late Noor Mohammad Taraki to late Dr. Najibullah, no one pasted his own portrait on the Afghan currency which despite worst kind of uncertain situation, didn't lose its credibility (not value) in the regional currency markets. During the regime of late Babrak Karmal, some of the currency notes without portraits of Mohammad Zahir Shah and Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan were introduced but after signing the Geneva Accord in 1988, such notes had failed to exist anymore.

In search of two time meals, war displaced Afghans have dominated each

and every locality of Peshawar but the trade in Chowk Yadgar is different. Here one can replace currency with currency. Everyday from 9.00 to 10.30 the currency dealers are receiving the value of Afghani and other currency. The dealers contact on hot-line with their agents in each and every corner of Afghanistan. And before Salam or Hello, their first question will be, What is the rate? And such question is repeated throughout the day.

Through such words, the dealers and traders describe their own point of view. Someone are engaged in trade of USA dollars, Saudi Riyal, UAE Dirham and others but mostly traders from war-ravaged Afghanistan are using it for ascertaining value of their own motherland currency. Soon after establishment of Mujahideen's Islamic government in Kabul when prices of the Afghani enhanced, a large number of local people included journalists have invested their

life savings in such a trade but later on its prices were not only reduced but even declined to zero level.

Unfortunately, after selling away all their assets now the Afghans have put themselves at exhibition for sale. Now just for their survival as well as to get a relief from the sounds of bullets and sticks of Talibans, these war-affected Afghans are compelled to auction themselves. Prices of the Afghans who intends to arrive at America is fixed at Rs 1.2 million, London at Rs one million and other European countries at Rs 0.6 million. Now after tightening the borders by USA, Saudi Arabia and other countries for the drug traffickers, the smugglers have started smuggling of Afghans. Thousands of Afghans nowadays are at mercy of the smugglers at Bangkok, Moscow, Singapore and several other countries.

Whenever, father dies, sons become disintegrate and same may be the fate of home. Apart from ruining the home, its women members scattered in all over the region.

Peshawar Diary

From Shamim Shahid

Training camps in Afghanistan

PRIME MINISTER Nawaz Sharif could not have been more open than he was when he said that there was solid evidence to indicate that sectarian terrorists had received training in camps in Afghanistan. He said that the Taliban leader Mulla Omar had been asked to close down these camps and last week the DG ISI had visited Kandahar to meet the Afghan leader and raise this issue with him. Apart from signalling a dramatic shift in relations with Taliban-dominated Afghanistan — Pakistan being about the only country openly supporting the Taliban — this also puts the current wave of sectarian terrorism sweeping Pakistan in a fresh perspective. Earlier, it was the Punjab chief minister who had suggested much the same. But his remarks were followed by a Foreign Office statement saying that the Taliban were not involved in terrorist acts in Pakistan which, as a matter of fact, was not quite what Mr Shahbaz Sharif had said. He had not pointed a direct finger at the Taliban and indeed for the Taliban to be behind terrorist acts in Pakistan would be the height of stupidity, let alone the height of ingratitude.

From its point of view, biting the hand that feeds it simply would not make any sense. But the matter of training camps is different. It is a well known fact that since the time of the Soviet occupation training camps have existed in Afghanistan. Indeed, no one should know this better than the American CIA and the Pakistani ISI which were behind the funding and arming of the Afghan resistance. Although at that time everyone was gung-ho about the fighting in Afghanistan, it was suggested even then that what was taking place in Afghanistan would someday have a spillover effect on Pakistan. But it was not fashionable to heed such voices then and, if anything, it was the United States which was the greatest promoter of what it now excoriates as 'Islamic fundamentalism'. How times have changed: what was good then has become today an unmitigated evil.

However, it should not have taken the current wave of sectarian killings to make the government wake up to this unsavoury fact. A strong nexus

exists between the Taliban in Afghanistan and some religious organizations in Pakistan. The border between the two countries has become blurred with constant movement from either side across it without let or hindrance or the formality of passports and visas. It was indicative of this situation that during the last round of fighting in Afghanistan, it was reported in Pakistani newspapers that madrassahs had been closed in Balochistan and the Frontier province so that students (or Talibs) could go and join the 'jihad' in Afghanistan. But another related fact should also be borne in mind. Training camps exist not only in Afghanistan. They are to be found in Pakistan as well. Various outfits — now in local parlance called jihadi outfits — openly recruit volunteers all over the country who are then imparted training in these camps. Is the prime minister quite sure that the sectarian terrorists he has talked about received their military skills in Afghanistan alone and not also in Pakistan? This aspect of the matter should be looked into.

But whatever the truth of the matter, training camps in Afghanistan or the 'foreign hand' generally whose spectre is invoked whenever terror strikes somewhere in this country should not become scapegoats for our own problems. There has been a governmental failure to maintain law and order and provide security to the citizens of the country. Sectarian terrorism is not a new phenomenon. It has been around for some time and even during the tenure of this government it has exacted a heavy toll. What has the government done in this regard? Are the police equipped to handle such well-organized crime? Has any effort been made to reform the police force which, after all, has to man the forward trenches in the fight against sectarian or indeed any other kind of organized violence? If there are outside causes of the disorder afflicting us, it is the government's responsibility to pinpoint them as the prime minister has done in the present case. But if there are inner or internal causes as well, the physician must consider the necessity of healing himself even as he looks around for other medicine.

DAWN

03 OCT 1989

EVER since the Soviet occupation, the rugged, landlocked area of Afghanistan has continued to dominate international headlines. For the last two decades it has failed to achieve the internal cohesion and consensus upon which the successful rule of King Zahir Shah was built.

Since the tanks rolled across its borders two decades back, might, rather than right, has dictated the policies of those who held sway in Kabul. The forcible occupation of the capital and the subjugation of the people at the point of a gun has been resisted irrespective of whose finger was on the trigger of the gun. The exploitation of communism, ethnicity and religion has failed to win legitimacy for those who have controlled Kabul in successive rotations.

Afghanistan is a land of different races and different sects. The inability to acquire legitimacy through compromise based on the social fabric of the native sons has wreaked havoc. The legitimacy, which the rule of King Zahir Shah enjoyed, had much to do with allegiance by different local leaders to the central authority. Thus the tribal leaders, or maliks as they are locally known, were accepted in the grand assembly irrespective of their religious, ideological or ethnic backgrounds. This is no longer the case. Each conqueror of Kabul excludes the rest from the "grand assembly" of decision-makers. This leads to conflict. The Soviets proclaimed the suzerainty of the communists, the Rabbani rule was the rule by the Tajiks to the exclusion of the others. Now the Taliban are demanding subservience on the basis of their Pakhtoon race. This is intensely resisted by the non-Pakhtoons.

Often the Taliban are at a loss to understand the dynamics of international reservations. They claim to have ensured peace in the country and of having disarmed the militias. But this falls far short of what is required: domestic consensus through broad-based participation.

The lack of a legitimate government backed by the free will of the people directly or through their recognized elders in the tribal system has led to a collapse of governance. The Taliban seek to fill the vacuum by physically taking control of the lives of an unwilling people. This extends to dictating what an individual can, or cannot, do. The worst hit of this totalitarian outlook are the Afghan women. They have had the right of individual choice usurped from them at the point of a gun. They are individually chained to their homes, not free to work or even to choose the clothes they might like to wear.

Taliban: madressahs or markets?

By Benazir Bhutto

As a student I learnt that Islam came to give women rights and to free women from being treated like chattel, property akin to the goats and cows that ancient shepherds owned. However, in Afghanistan, the wheel of history has turned once again. Women, in Islamic history, fought wars, gave sermons from mosques, wrote literature and did business. In fact, the Holy Prophet Mohammed himself married a working woman. In Afghanistan, that is forgotten.

Where did the Taliban come from? Twenty years earlier, their families, often moderate, fled the Soviet occupation. While they fought the jihad, their sons studied in madressahs (schools) set up to recruit and train warriors in the battle against communism. An accident of fate ensured that they would be brainwashed into robots by imparting to them the teachings of extremists. The followers of this school of thought are limited in number. In Pakistan they have never won an election. Nor do they believe in elections. They believe in seizing power through extra-constitutional means.

When the Soviets were in Kabul, a diehard follower of the extremist and orthodox school of thought was sitting in Islamabad. General Zia-ul-Haq, the former chief martial law administrator, came from the same

orthodox background as Maulana Maudoodi's. Their fathers were friends. When Zia became the chief of army staff, he began distributing orthodox literature amongst the armed forces. I know because I was with my father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, when he received the report. Prime Minister Bhutto sought to have a professional army and stopped its conversion on religious-political grounds. However, in 1977, Gen. Zia seized power. Orthodoxy became the high priest of the Zia era.

In his days Maulana Maudoodi had opposed the creation of Pakistan. He opposed partition, seeking to restore the pristine glorious days of Muslim rule in New Delhi through preaching of his school of thought, conversion and force. An international religious movement was their aim.

This is also the aim of the Taliban, the political heirs of the Zia and orthodox legacies in Afghanistan. It is an unrealistic dream ignoring the difference between the temporal and spiritual world. Whilst the faithful turn to God for religion, they

turn to their rulers for providing a framework in the material world where citizens can survive and prosper.

Thus the Taliban have a lot of hard thinking to do. They control Kabul by force but political control and recognition has proved elusive. The Taliban do have a power base in Kandahar. However, by overreaching themselves they have made many enemies. The friends they made in high places during the heyday of General Zia are now dead, tired or old. Their influence within Pakistan's establishment is waning.

The Taliban would do well to ponder the advice given them by Pakistan when I led the country: make peace with the other important players in Afghanistan who governed the country along with President Rabbani. The Taliban make naive attempts at attracting investment in the country. They dream of controlling a portion of the strategic flow of fuel resources to East Asia and Japan in the twentieth century. But they are living in isolation and seclusion. Their grandiose vision of building pipelines will remain a mirage as long as international finance remains suspicious of their brand of

not the recipe to build confidence.

The Taliban have thrived on importing luxury goods for Afghanistan and then smuggling them into Pakistan. That lucrative trade will diminish. The world stands on the brink of a new order. Under this system, customs duties will drop and be substituted for sales tax. What then will the Taliban do?

The Taliban thinking is rooted in a cold war prism of strategic importance. The balance of power politics, however, has shifted from missiles to markets. So long as Afghanistan bristles with kalashnikovs, its markets will remain dormant and its rulers will grow increasingly short of revenues.

The Taliban could take a leaf out of Indo-Pak relations. Once sworn enemies that recently nearly came to blows in Kargil, they are talking to each other unconditionally. It is a talk born out of the inevitability of the new market forces, which are shaping global politics today. The Taliban could take a leaf out of the Indo-Pak dialogue. They could begin a dialogue with their own sworn enemies and create a broad-based government. They would have to give up some territory and power but they would win stability and legitimacy.

Or they could just pursue the path of extremism and fanaticism and be increasingly marginalized.

DAWN

13 OCT 2001

The Taliban thinking is rooted in a cold war prism of strategic importance. The balance of power politics, however, has shifted from missiles to markets. So long as Afghanistan bristles with kalashnikovs, its markets will remain dormant and its rulers will grow increasingly short of revenues.

politics. Hosting Osama bin Laden, cultivating poppy despite assertions to the contrary and denying exporting revolution as extremism rises in the countries neighbouring them is

Taliban to seek ulema's advice on Bin Laden

ISLAMABAD, Oct 16: Afghanistan's Taliban movement on Saturday rejected a UN demand to hand over Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden and instead proposed that a group of Islamic scholars advise them on a "solution".

It was the first reaction from the Taliban to the threat of UN sanctions against its lifeline national airline as part of a tightening world squeeze to force bin Laden's extradition.

"Osama's issue is an Islamic issue and the only way to resolve it is through a unanimous decision by ulema of three Islamic countries, including Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and another third Islamic country," a spokesman for the office of Taliban supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar told the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press.

The Taliban, which swept to power in 1996 and now control some 90 per cent of the country but is denied world recognition.

"Unless we have a decision on bin Laden, according to Islamic tenets, we cannot hand over Osama bin Laden to anyone," the spokesman said when asked about the UN Security Council sanctions on the Taliban, which demand bin Laden's surrender for trial on alleged charges he plotted the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Africa.

The spokesman, speaking from the eastern Afghan city of Kandahar, called the resolution "unjust and cruel". "This cruel decision has been taken under the US pressure," he said.

BACKED BY ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS: The US initiated reso-

lution received the votes of all 15 council members, although Malaysia and Bahrain expressed concern about its effects on ordinary Afghans.

Diplomats said the new military government in Pakistan was also under pressure to use its key influence with the Taliban to get bin Laden removed from his hideout, which is thought to be in Jalalabad, close to Afghanistan's eastern frontier.

The United States raised the issue, the main focus of its Afghan policy, in talks on Friday between the US ambassador to Pakistan, William Milam, and Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf. Further details were not available.

The Taliban say bin Laden is not engaged in any terrorist acts and is living in a secret location with a special Taliban squad of guards and is denied access to his satellite telephone and contact with the outside world.

The sanctions go into effect on November 14 after a 30-day grace period unless bin Laden has been handed over by then. They require countries to ban flights by planes owned, operated or leased by the Taliban, and to freeze bank accounts and property owned or controlled by the movement.

Ariana flies regularly to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, which has become its economic centre of gravity for a small but thriving trader elite in Kabul and other key cities. It also operates flights to India, from which it imports medicines and footwear, and occasionally flies to Saudi Arabia and to Germany carrying pilgrims and rugs for export. —Reuters

Taliban seek good ties with new administration

ISLAMABAD, Oct 14: Supreme leader of Afghanistan ruling Taliban Mullah Mohammad Omar has expressed the desire to establish good ties with the new administration in Pakistan.

"Afghanistan as usual wishes maintenance of peace and security and presence of a strong government for the fraternal and neighbouring Pakistan," an Afghan embassy statement quoted Omar as saying.

The Taliban leader blamed foreign powers for not allowing Pakistan to establish an independent and strong government.

"The existent abrupt change in Pakistan is considered an internal issue of Pakistan by Afghanistan. However based on the prevailing political and diplomatic atmosphere and information on local media, this change in Pakistan is a reaction to the moves of certain foreign powers on the pride and freedom of the national army and the parliamentary government of Pakistan."

Omar assured Pakistan and its people of Afghanistan's desire to have best cordial relations with every government of Pakistan.

The Afghan opposition alliance has, however, welcomed the dismissal of Nawaz Sharif government and hoped that changes in the neighbouring country could prove good for the Afghans.—NNI

DAWN

16 OCT 1999

NATION 17 OCT 1999

Taliban optimistic about solution of Osama issue

ISLAMABAD (NNI) – Taliban have expressed optimism about the resolution of the issue of Osama bin Laden saying the problem could certainly be settled if the realities are kept in view.

"If there is a will, there is a way. There is no issue the world over that could not be resolved provided the solution does not go in favour of one party rather the rights, demands and sentiments of the parties concerned are kept in view. We have ways and means for the solution of the problem and we want to present these to the Americans during talks" said Taliban Information Minister Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi in an interview with VOA.

He said that ways and means should be found wherein the US concern is removed. "I am certain the issue could be resolved if the responsible and high-ranking officials of the two sides hold talks on it", Muttaqi said.

Muttaqi said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready for talks with the United States as Taliban want to resolve the issue of Osama-bin-Laden through talks and consensus. "We want to find such a solution to the problem wherein the traditions and national pride of the Afghan nation is not stained and Islamic principles are kept in mind. We are ready to find a solution to the problem and hold talks with them", the minister said.

He said that at present, a high level delegation of the Islamic Emirate is ready to talk to senior US officials. The Afghans would welcome, if instead of exerting pressure and sounding warn-

ing, the United States responds positively and gets ready for talks and consensus for the basic resolution of the issue.

"I think, now is the time that they should pay heed to the issue to find a solution to it. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants good relations with the government and people of the United States. We want good ties with the world countries and do not want to create problems for others" Muttaqi added.

He asked the United States not to create problems for the Afghans and keep the problems of the Afghans into considerations. "We have put forward proposals in the past as well and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan empowered the Supreme Court to pursue the case if people produced evidences in this regard", he said.

He said "the Americans had until now been admitting that he (Bin Laden) is not a convict rather an accused as no crime has been proved against him. No crime has been proved against him in the past and the US is concerned about the future.

The US should explore ways and means for preventing its future concern. Such ways and means should be explored wherein the Islamic and national pride and Islamic law and religious sentiments of the Afghan are kept in view.

He said that the supreme Taliban's leader Mulla Muhammad Omar has proposed that they would respect if the scholars of Islamic countries sit and make a decision on the issue.

Taliban order cut in opium crop

KABUL, Oct 6: Afghanistan's ruling Taliban has ordered opium growers to cut next season's crop by a third and appealed to the international community to boost aid in return.

"Since the season for poppy sowing has arrived again, we are announcing to all poppy growers to decrease by a third their poppy cultivation," Taliban Supreme leader Mulla Mohammad Omar said in a

Radio Shariat broadcast. "Violators will be given legal punishment."

The United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) said 97 per cent of this year's crop was grown in areas controlled by the Taliban.

Omar said in return for announcing the cut in opium production, he hoped the world community would help fund public projects in Afghanistan and help improve its dire economic situation.—AFP

Taliban execute man publicly

KABUL, Oct 12: The Taliban executed a man accused of murder in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif in front of thousands of spectators, the Radio Shariat announced on Tuesday.

Mohammad Qasem, accused of killing Mohammad Yunus, another local resident, was executed on Monday in a sports stadium with the approval of Taliban supreme leader Mulla Mohammad Omar, the militia mouthpiece said.

The death sentence handed down by a local military court was carried out under the ruling of Qisas, the radio added.—AFP

DAWN

13 OCT 1998

Taliban chief orders poppy crop cut

KABUL: A spokesman for the Taliban in Afghanistan has said their leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, has issued a decree ordering farmers who grow poppies to cut their cultivation by a third next year.

The spokesman, Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwah, said those who do not comply will be liable to prosecution. He said the decree was a step towards eradicating poppy cultivation for the production of drugs. He said this could not be achieved immediately because the farmers were too poor to grow alternative crops and appealed to the United Nations to give the farmers financial support.—PPI

DAWN

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Taliban say UN sanctions cruel act

ISLAMABAD, Oct 26: Taliban on Tuesday described the UN Security sanctions on Afghanistan as a cruel act, saying Osama bin Laden would not be handed over to the United States under any pressure.

An Afghan embassy statement ruled out Osama's extradition and said only religious scholars could settle the issue in accordance with Islamic principles.

The statement, signed by Afghan Charge d'affaires Maulvi Saeedur Rehman Haqqani, said the United States had failed to produce any evidence about Osama's involvement in terrorism.

"The United States was behind the Security Council resolution, threatening imposition of economic sanctions against the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan if bin Laden was not handed over to Washington within a month," it said.

The statement said Bin Laden was not the main reason for the US enmity with the Taliban as the world people in general and Afghans in particular know what were the real objectives of the United States.

"Washington is threatening to slap economic sanctions on the

Taliban government in the pretext of human rights, women rights, drugs and terrorist training charges in Afghanistan. We are ready to hold talks on bin Laden issue with the United States or any other country provided they present arguments and proposals in this regard".

The statement said: "Our view is that bin Laden is a Mujahid who has taken refuge in Afghanistan. Now his fate is linked with the religious decree of religious scholars.

The United States should have acknowledged the valour and bravery of the heroic and valiant Afghan nation who inflicted a crushing defeat on the erstwhile Soviet Union, it said, adding that instead of extending cooperation and assistance to the Afghan nation, the United States assisted the terrorists, aggressors and oppressors by according recognition to the so-called regime of Rabbani.

The United States, the statement said, had not done any favour to the Afghans as what it did during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was in its own interests as it was scared of the Red Army.—NNI

Osama's handover will be a 'betrayal of Islam'

DUBAI (AFP) - The leader of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia said Monday that the handover of alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden as demanded by the UN Security Council would amount to a 'betrayal of Islam.'

Bin Laden, who has been stripped of Saudi nationality and taken refuge in Afghanistan, is 'a Muslim who took part in the Jihad (holy war) against the communists,' Mulla Mohammad Omar said, referring to the Soviet occupation of the 1980s. 'To extradite him would amount to a betrayal of Islam. It would be very difficult for us,' the leader of the Islamist militia which controls most of Afghanistan told the London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Hayat*.

Taliban to accept Osama's plan to leave Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia said Saturday it was willing to accept an offer by Osama bin Laden to secretly leave Afghanistan with its help.

The Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, in a statement carried by the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press, said he wanted to ensure Osama's statement was not made under any 'fear or pressure.'

'If there is a confirmation by Osama, we will not oppose his wish and consider how to arrange his departure,' the Taliban chief said.

Omar vowed that the Taliban would never bow to any pressure nor hand Osama over to face a trial.

The Saudi-born millionaire in a letter to Omar Friday offered to leave Afghanistan on condition the Taliban ensured safe and secret passage to a third unnamed country, according to AIP.

Osama, who has lived in Afghanistan as a guest of the religious militia, is blamed by the United States for the August 7, 1988 bombings of its two embassies in East Africa in which more than 200 people were killed.

His offer appeared to be linked to heightened Taliban worries over its international isolation and growing pressure on them to expel Osama.

The United Nations Security Council earlier this month told the Taliban it would impose sanctions if Osama were not extradited by November 14.

The demand was rejected as 'unjust and cruel' by the Taliban who proposed an Islamic solution to the bin Laden issue by a roundtable of religious scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and a third unnamed country.

Earlier official Afghani sources said Taliban leaders would meet soon to discuss Osama's offer.

AIP quoted a militia spokesman as saying Omar would give a reply to Osama over the coming days after the consultation.

NATION

19 OCT 1989

NATION

31 OCT 1989

Mutawakkil new FM, Haqqani made envoy to Islamabad

Top-level reshuffle in Kabul

By Nafees Takkar

ISLAMABAD - Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar Wednesday made major changes in his top level administration and appointed a new foreign minister of Afghanistan.

The drastic reshuffle with some new appointments were made through a decree issued by Mullah Muhammad Omar from Kandahar, an official of the Afghan embassy in Islamabad confirmed. The official said changes were made in the civil as well as the military setup of Taliban administration. The major reshuffle took place for the first time after the fall of Kabul to Taliban in September 1996.

Maulvi Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil has been made as new Foreign Minister of Afghanistan. His predecessor Mullah Muhammad Hasan Akhund has been made deputy to the Head of the Supreme Council Mullah Muhammad Rabbani. Hasan will be called as Cabinet Minister and will work as deputy head of the Supreme Council comprising ministers. This post is just a new creation in the administrative setup of the Taliban. The post may have been created to check the powers of the Head of the Supreme Council and ministers.

The new Foreign Minister, Mullah Mutawakkil was the chief spokesman of Taliban since the commencement of Taliban Movement. He is considered a close confidant of Mullah Omar. He led a number of Taliban delegations to foreign countries and considered to be very vocal on policy statements. Observers believe his appointment as Foreign Minister will activate Taliban's foreign policy.

The new interior minister is now Mullah Abdul Razaq. He replaced Mullah Khairullah.

Khairullah has been given the charge of Governor of Herat, south-western province bordering Iran. Mullah Abdul Razaq is a famous commander of Taliban.

He was made prisoner in Mazar-i-Sharif during Taliban's first attempt on Mazar in May 1997. After his dramatic release from General Malik's men, he was made Governor of Herat province. He was then promoted and was made Deputy Defence Minister. He played a major role in the final fall of Mazar-i-Sharif last year.

The Minister for Information and Culture, Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi, was replaced by Mullah Qudratullah. Muttaqi has now been given the portfolio of the director of the secretariat of the President, though, Afghanistan has no President.

The new Information Minister was a representative of Taliban Movement based in Quetta, capital of Balochistan

province. He also worked as director President's Secretariat in Kabul.

Mullah Omar also appointed a new ambassador to Islamabad. His name is Syed Muhammad Haqqani who replaced Mullah Saeedur Rehman Haqqani. The latter has not got yet another portfolio and had been asked to report to Kandahar.

The decree issued by Mullah Omar has also announced some changes in the military administration of Taliban. Some of the commanders were transferred from their old positions and have been appointed as commanders of new military bases.

The decree gives no reason for the changes that were made on Wednesday. Afghan analysts, however, say that most of the ministers were holding their portfolios for a long time and therefore the Taliban chief might have opted for giving them new responsibilities in the administration. All of the new appointees and those who were replaced, are ethnic Pashtoons.

Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi and Mullah Khairullah were the Information and Interior ministers since the fall of Kabul in 1996. Similarly Wakil Ahmad was regarded as the chief spokesman of Taliban since the beginning of the movement.

The outgoing Foreign Minister, Mullah Muhammad Hasan Akhund, was made Foreign Minister last year. He replaced the former deputy Foreign Minister Mullah Jalil. While Mullah Ghaus was made Foreign Minister soon after the fall of Kabul. His post remained vacant when he was made prisoner by General Malik in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Though he got release from forces of the anti-Taliban alliance but he was given no new post.

Anti-Taliban forces claim capture of key areas

KABUL (AFP) - Afghan opposition forces captured several towns after a heavy overnight assault on the ruling Taliban militia in the northern province of Samangan, opposition officials said Wednesday. General Sayed Hussain Anwari, of the anti-Taliban United Front, said the opposition alliance captured Safed Kotal, Chabchal, Dehi, Maqsood and Keshendeh in the key provincial valley of Darae Sauf. 'The enemy was completely routed from Darae Sauf,' said Anwari by satellite telephone from an opposition base in northern Afghanistan.

He said fighting was now going on around Sholgara district adjacent to Balkh province.

Anwari said fighters from alliance members Jamiat-i-Islami, Harakat-i-Islami, and Wahdat-i-Islami participated in the attack.

Darae Sauf valley, 200 kilometers north of Kabul, is surrounded by mountains overlooking a parallel road between Bamiyan and Balkh provinces, both held by the Taliban militia.

Mohammad Muhaqeq, a top official of the Wahdat-i-Islami said the Taliban had been pushed back 80 kilometres deep inside Balkh.

NATION

30 OCT 1999

Global isolation behind Taliban cabinet reshuffle

KABUL (AFP) - Administrative and military failures and growing international isolation were the main motives for this week's cabinet reshuffle by Taliban, analysts say.

After three years in power, the religious militia was under great pressure to end domestic stagnation and jettison a failed foreign policy.

"Ailing foreign policy and increasing international isolation are among the main contributing factors," a western analyst said adding the militia "needs to improve its image through changes and reforms."

Observers said new Foreign Minister Maulavi Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkel, who replaced Mulla Mohammad Hassan Akhond in the reshuffle announced Wednesday, was more dynamic and approachable.

"This was actually the key element of the reshuffle and Mutawakkel is expected to open the windows to the outside world," said another analyst, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Mutawakkel on Thursday said his top priority would be to remove misgivings about the Taliban and improve relations with the United States and other western countries. "The western world harbours a lot of suspicions about the Tal-

iban. My main task will be to remove these misunderstandings," Mutawakkel told the Afghan Islamic Press.

In the reshuffle designed to bring about a "better" military and administrative order, supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar removed Information Minister Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi and put in his place a new face, Maulavi Qudratullah.

Muttaqi was sidelined to head the administrative affairs department.

Interior Minister Maulavi Khairullah Khair Khwa became Governor of Herat and chief of military and civilian affairs of the southwestern zone.

Mulla Abdurrazzaq Akhond was named Interior Minister.

Maulavi Saaduddin, deputy of public works, became Kabul Mayor, a job which requires him to clean up the mess in the war-battered capital.

Maulavi Sayed Mohammad Haqani was appointed Ambassador to Islamabad, which is the religious militia's window to the outside world.

The Taliban regime is recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

For the third successive year, it failed to secure Afghanistan's seat at the United Nations which is held by the ousted

government of ex-president Burhanuddin Rabbani.

The UN General Assembly retained Rabbani's representative after the Credentials Committee endorsed the move on October 19.

Observers said the Taliban's affiliation with Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden and some other Muslim fundamentalist groups eroded the initial sympathy they had won for restoring peace and security in the war-torn country.

"The Taliban are friendless in the international arena, a shortfall they have come to well realize," a western observer said. In the domestic sphere, the religious militia faced sharp criticism for not doing enough to tackle poverty in a country wracked by 20 years of conflict kicked off with the Soviet invasion of 1979. The Taliban, who control most of Afghanistan, are still embroiled in a bloody battle with supporters of Rabbani's ex-minister Ahmad Shah Masood. In their summer and autumn offensives this year, the Taliban made initial gains against Masood to the north of Kabul and in northeastern regions of the country only to be rebuffed by the opposition after heavy casualties.

Some analysts link the changes in the military field command to the setbacks.

Taliban deny sending militants to Chechnya

PESHAWAR, Oct 26: Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia has contradicted reports that it has sent militants to fight Russian troops in the breakaway republic of Chechnya, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) news agency reported.

A Taliban spokesman, Mulla Wakil Ahmed, told AIP from the militia headquarters in Kandahar on Tuesday that the reports of "our sending 500 fighters to Chechnya

are wrong." He added: "We strongly condemn what the Russians are doing to an Islamic country."

Russia has mounted ground and air strikes against Chechnya to flush out suspected Muslim separatists.

Ahmed said: "We support the Chechen people but we are locked in our own problems (and are) not in a position to send fighters there."—DPA

DAWN

27 OCT 1999

Afghan leaders to discuss Osama offer to leave

NATION 31 OCT 1999

KABUL (AFP) - Leaders of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia will meet soon to discuss alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden's offer to leave the country, official Afghan sources said Saturday.

The Saudi-born millionaire, accused by the United States of terrorism, made the offer in a letter to Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar on condition the Taliban ensured safe and secret passage to a third unnamed country, according to the private Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

The sources did not say exactly when Omar, who is based in the city of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, would convene the militia's consultative council to discuss the issue.

The Pakistan-based AIP, a usual conduit for Taliban announcements, quoted a militia spokesman as saying Omar would give a reply to bin

Laden over the coming days after the consultation.

Bin Laden, who has lived in Afghanistan as a guest of the religious militia, is blamed by the United States for August 7, 1988 bombings of its two embassies in East Africa in which more than 200 people were killed.

His offer appeared to be linked to heightened Taliban worries over its international isolation and growing pressure on them to expel bin Laden.

The United Nations Security Council earlier this month told the Taliban it would impose sanctions if bin Laden were not extradited by November 14.

The demand was rejected as 'unjust and cruel' by the Taliban who proposed an Islamic solution to the bin Laden issue by a roundtable of reli-

gious scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and a third unnamed country.

Washington has reacted coolly to bin Laden's apparent offer.

'Osama bin Laden can run from Afghanistan, but he cannot hide from our determination to seek justice,' State Department spokesman James Rubin said. 'We will have a long, long memory. He cannot hide from the long arm of the law.'

Washington has been in talks with Taliban officials on how best to deal with bin Laden, but no consensus has yet been arrived at.

The last such meeting occurred in Washington on Monday between Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderfurth and the Taliban's New York-based representative Abdul Hakeem Mujahid.

Taliban give positive response to Osama's offer

KABUL, Oct 30: The Taliban administration said on Saturday it was willing to accept an offer by Osama bin Laden to secretly leave Afghanistan with its help.

The Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, in a statement carried by the Afghan Islamic Press, said he wanted to ensure Bin Laden's statement was not made under any "fear or pressure".

"If there is a confirmation by Osama, we will not oppose his wish and consider how to arrange his departure," the Taliban chief said.

Omar vowed that the Taliban would never bow to any pressure nor hand Osama over to face a trial.

The Saudi-born millionaire, accused by the United States of terrorism, in a letter to Omar on Friday offered to leave Afghanistan on condition the Taliban ensured safe and secret passage to a third unnamed country, according to AIP.

A senior militia spokesman, Abdul Hai Mutmaen, told AFP that if Bin Laden's offer was found to be voluntary, the Taliban government would help find him a safe passage.

"With regard to Osama's letter that he intends to leave Afghanistan and needs assistance, we want to talk to him to ensure that his decision is voluntary and not out of fear," Mutmaen said.

"If it is established that he has written the letter out of fear that

the Islamic Emirate will expel or extradite him, we want to assure him that we will never do so."

His offer appeared to be linked to heightened Taliban worries over its international isolation and growing pressure on them to expel Bin Laden.

The United Nations Security Council earlier this month told the Taliban it would impose sanctions if Bin Laden were not extradited by Nov 14.

The demand was rejected as "unjust and cruel" by the Taliban, who proposed a religious solution to the Bin Laden issue by a roundtable of religious scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and a third unnamed country.

Earlier official Afghan sources said Taliban leaders would meet soon to discuss Bin Laden's offer.

The sources did not say exactly when Omar, who is based in Kandahar, would convene the militia's consultative council to discuss the issue. The AIP quoted a militia spokesman as saying Omar would give a reply to Bin Laden over the coming days after the consultation.

In Washington, the State Department has reacted coolly to Bin Laden's offer.

"Osama bin Laden can run from Afghanistan, but he cannot hide from our determination to seek justice," spokesman James Rubin said.—AFP

DAWN

31 OCT 1999

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

04 OCT 1999

More sanctions to complicate problem: Taliban

ISLAMABAD: Taliban have said that if the United States and other members of the Security Council impose more sanctions on Afghanistan, it would further complicate the problem instead of resolving it.

"I talked to them at the UN a week ago and told them that such activities of the US would be only in the interests of Iran and Russia, which want permanent instability in Afghanistan while the US can get nothing out of it", said Taliban's envoy in New York Maulvi Abdul Hakim Mujahid in an interview with the BBC.

He said that Taliban's administration is aware of these consultations and has started talks with Washington

to prevent these sanctions. He said several countries in the Security Council are trying to impose some restrictions not against Afghanistan but for dislodging or weakening the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

This is against the principles of the UN Charter because these countries ignore the Rabbani government which they have recognized and impose sanctions against the government, which they have not so far recognized and view it like a group.

"We held talks with US authorities formally and now too, our doors are open to them. We have said that problems should be resolved through dialogue and not through restriction",

Mujahid said.

The United States has got closer to striking an agreement with other members of the Security Council to ban flights of Afghan Ariana Airlines and freeze its assets.

Washington has already frozen the assets of the airlines and banned transaction of US firms with Afghanistan. Russia, the present President of the Security Council also dislikes Taliban and wants to impose wide sanctions against them.

The factors behind such restrictions have been described as presence of Osama-bin-Laden in Afghanistan whom the US accuses of involvement in terrorism.—NNI

Taliban pessimistic about seat at UN

KABUL (AFP) - Among the Taliban's rank and file the cherished dream remains a seat in the United Nations General Assembly but they realise their chances of formal international acceptance are slim.

Along the front lines and in towns, Taliban troops talk of legitimacy for the Islamic militia amid their conspiracy theories surrounding world intransigence and the increased isolation being faced by Taliban authorities.

"Why don't you like us?" one soldier asks. "The enemies of Islam are against us," says another. "America does not want to see a pure Islamic country emerge from Afghanistan."

Similar lines are repeated in the Taliban's capital of Kandahar where the chief advisor to the militia's leadership Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkel says Washington is

anti-Islamic and hiding behind issues such as terrorism.

Only Pakistan, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia recognise the Taliban. All three are Islamic countries and US allies. A further 48 countries from the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) do not accept the Taliban.

Sovereignty is still held by former president Burhanuddin Rabbani who was ousted from Kabul by the Taliban in 1996 but continues to wage a civil war against the militia from the north-east provinces.

This is a sore point for the Taliban who argue that after five years of war they control most of Afghanistan and are therefore entitled to the UN seat and the associated benefits of that come with sovereignty.

Taliban urge US to talk

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's Taliban, condemning the United States' sanctions as a futile exercise, urged Washington Saturday to open dialogue with the ruling religious militia.

Deputy Minister of Mines and Industries, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Zaeef told journalists that it was 'unfair' to hurt the Afghan people with sanctions.

"Compared to others, the people of Afghanistan are poor and hungry. It is unfair if more sanctions are imposed on them," he said.

"It will be useful if talks are held for solution of the problems," he said, reaffirming that the militia was trying to improve its foreign relations.

Washington this year slapped sanctions against the Taliban banning all US-based companies from making deals with the militia, accused of harbouring Osama bin Laden and failing to curb opium production.

NATION

04 OCT 1999

FRONTIER POST

06 OCT 1999

Taliban demand right to compete at Sydney Games

KABUL (AFP) - Taliban sports authorities Tuesday demanded the International Olympic Committee revise a decision which effectively barred Afghan athletes from competing at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.

The hardline Islamic rulers also chided the IOC and implied officials had bowed to US pressure after Washington slapped trade sanctions against the militia for harbouring alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden.

"The IOC is representing 165 countries of the world and we call on IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch not to be used by one country and for the IOC to revise their decision," sports minister Mulla Abdul Shokour Mutmaen said.

Three days ago the IOC announced that it no longer recognised the Afghan Olympic Committee which is run by the Taliban who control most of Afghanistan after a five year civil war.

However, the IOC said Afghan athletes would be able to compete in Sydney as individuals and not as representatives of Afghanistan.

Mutmaen rejected this saying any Afghan athlete taking part should be able to fly the plain white flag of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

"But, I don't think the announcement came from the IOC but from pressure from enemy countries who don't want to see peace and security in Afghanistan," he added.

Mutmaen declined to say specifically that the US was behind the IOC decision but the Taliban's secretary general for the Olympics Mohammad Khalid said "it's possible the US sanctions had something to do with this".

In July, Washington froze Taliban bank accounts and imposed trade sanctions as part of its efforts to force the militia into handing over bin Laden who is wanted for a string of crimes.

These include the bombing of two US embassies in east Africa in August 1998 which left more than 200 people dead.

"We have no limitations on sport. The IOC has combined sport and politics when everyone knows they are separate. We and our athletes are sorry and we want the IOC to revise this decision.

"This year we put a lot of effort into organising a lot of competition. It's the athletes right to take part and the IOC has usurped their right," Khalid said.

The Taliban had planned to send 15 athletes to Sydney to compete in athletics, boxing and martial arts, and Mutmaen said several athletes were medal winning prospects.

He added that all Afghan athletes were treated with the same esteem and ethnic origin was not an issue, be they Pashtoon, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen or Hazara.

"But we think the IOC has discriminated against us and are not treating us with the same esteem as other countries," Mutmaen said.

Taliban vow to rein in terrorists

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: Afghanistan's Taliban movement said on Friday it would rein in Pakistani Mujahideen helping them fight against the Afghan opposition after Pakistan complained some of them were engaged in sectarian violence back home.

The Taliban assurances came a day after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said some of the people allegedly involved in a wave of sectarian violence in Pakistan had received weapons training in Afghanistan.

"Nobody has been trained in Afghanistan against Pakistan or engage in terrorism in Pakistan," the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted Taliban spokesman Maulvi Wakil Ahmed as saying by telephone from the southern Afghan town of Kandahar.

"But despite that...we want to make it certain for Pakistani Mujahideen present in Afghanistan that Afghanistan does not want its soil to be used against any other country, and we cannot even imagine such a course against Pakistan," he said.

Ahmed did not elaborate on how the Taliban would ensure the fighters did not use their skills when they returned home.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told a news conference in Islamabad on Thursday that some of those arrested for involvement in sectarian killings had told interrogators that they had been trained at a camp in Afghanistan.

He did not say who was running that camp, but said Pakistani officials had taken this "evidence" to Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in Kandahar and demanded that "such camps must immediately be closed down".

AIP quoted Ahmed as saying Islamabad's complaint had not strained relations between the two sides. "We are ready for every kind of cooperation with Pakistan."

The Pakistani Foreign Ministry on Wednesday rejected speculation in some local newspapers that the mainly Taliban were involved in the sectarian violence.—Reuters

FRONTIER POST

08 OCT 2000

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09 OCT 1999

Taliban hope UN will reject US sanctions

PESHAWAR, Oct 8: Taliban militia on Friday expressed confidence that the United Nations would turn out proposed US sanctions against hardline militia.

"The United States wants to impose its policies by force and never talked with (Taliban militia of) Afghanistan with sincerity," Taliban's senior spokesman Wakil Ahmed told the private AIP news agency by telephone from Kandahar in southwestern Afghanistan.

The United States on Wednesday asked the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against the Taliban for its refusal to turn over alleged Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden.

Bin Laden has been indicted by a US Federal Court of terrorist activities against the US government. He was accused of masterminding the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, in which 250 people were killed and thousands injured.

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke, presented to the 15-nation council Wednesday a draft resolution calling for a ban on Taliban aircraft from taking off or landing in the countries of UN members. The draft also demanded a freeze on bank accounts, funds and property under the control of the Taliban.

It demanded that the Taliban to stop giving "sanctuary and training for international terrorists and their

organizations" and to ensure that Afghanistan is not used as a base for terrorist organizations and camps, or for the preparation of terrorist acts.

The draft called on the Taliban to comply promptly with UN resolutions and turn over bin Laden "without further delay" to a country that has taken appropriate steps to bring the fugitive Saudi to justice. The name of the country was not given.

Ahmed warned that the proposed US sanctions would make things worse for the Afghan people as a whole. "We are ready for talks on all issues. We condemn terrorism in all forms," he added.

The Taliban official also dismissed reports that the Taliban were using Ariana airlines for drug-trafficking.

Militia's leader Mulla Omar recently decreed that poppy growers in Taliban-ruled areas should reduce their cultivation by one-third, according to Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

The verdict, broadcast by Taliban-run Radio Shariat, warned of severe punishment for the farmers who defied the orders from the leader of militia.

Omar said Taliban administration "is ready to cooperate with international anti-drug agencies for the complete elimination of poppy from Afghanistan provided they launch projects for the welfare of our farmers."—DPA

Taliban ask Pakistan not to impose ban on ATT

ISLAMABAD (NNI) Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have asked Pakistan not to impose the proposed ban on the Afghan Transit Trade.

The demand was made when the NWFP government proposed to exclude another 40 items from the list of Afghan Transit Trade owing to the smuggling of foreign goods to Pakistan causing great losses to the Pakistani companies. Islamabad has recently complained about the increasing smuggling to Afghanistan.

Although senior spokesman of the Taliban Maulvi Wakil Ahmed Mutawakel did not reject the smuggling of a number of goods to Pakistan, he said it is the duty of Pakistan government to monitor the border. He said Afghanistan and Pakistan governments have held talks on the issue and would hold further talks. "Both the sides have their own arguments but I think we would eventually reach a conclusion to resolve the problems of the people of the two countries", Mutawakel said in an interview with the BBC.

He said that Pakistan authorities obviously argue that some Pakistani companies are running in loss and said that Afghanistan should import only those items required by it. But Afghanistan is of the view that it should import whatever it deems necessary and it is the responsibility and duty of the Pakistan government to monitor the border, he observed.

NATION

11 OCT 1999

Taliban refuse visas to Kyrgyz delegation

ISLAMABAD (NNI) - Afghan embassy refused visas to members of a Kyrgyz team, who wanted to visit Kabul for talks with Taliban about the presence of leader of an Uzbek Islamic group in Afghanistan, allegedly in the abduction of 4 Japanese geologists, in Kyrgyzstan, sources said Sunday.

"Taliban had earlier agreed to grant visas to the members of the delegation, however, later they dropped the idea with a view not to create another issue like Osama bin Laden," the sources said. The team was scheduled to leave for home on Sunday after their request was turned down.

The team had earlier held preliminary talks with Taliban diplomats in Islamabad last month and planned to proceed to Kabul for further talks. Taliban officials had denied presence of the Uzbek Islamist leader in Afghanistan but promised that Taliban would look with the man through their own channels.

NATION

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Taliban reject US criticism over women's rights

KABUL (AFP) - The Taliban on Sunday rejected US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's criticism of women's rights in Afghanistan as slander.

Albright was spreading 'slanders' by frequently raising the issue of the Afghan women in a bid to pursue her own political objectives, the militia's official organ, the *Shariat* weekly, said.

'It will be true if we say that she uses human rights as a political shield and politically manipulates the issue,' it said.

Albright, addressing the California Governor's Conference for Women last Tuesday, accused the Taliban of treating women as chattel.

She condemned the Taliban for be-

ing 'determined to drag Afghan women back from the dawn of the 21st century to somewhere closer to the 13th.'

Shariat argued that women in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan commanded respect.

'She should understand that the Afghan woman is the most dignified woman the world over. In the light of the Islamic Shariah law she is kept in high esteem.

'She enjoys complete dignity and protection and is not used as an animal, which was the status of women in the medieval west,' it claimed.

The Taliban militia, emerging from religious schools in southern Afghanistan and Pakistan five years

ago, has imposed an ultra-orthodox interpretation of Islamic Shariah law in most of the country under its control.

The Taliban authorities have banned women from work and education and forced them wear an all-body enveloping garment called burqa when venturing outside their homes.

Accusing Albright of distorting events in Afghanistan and spreading 'poisonous propaganda' to hatch 'conspiracies' against the Taliban, the weekly said if she really sympathized with Afghan women she should have sent them some medicines, clothes and food.

France providing aid to opposition: Taliban

KABUL, Oct 9: Afghanistan's ruling Taliban have accused France of sending military assistance to opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood, official sources said on Saturday.

Heywadi, an official newspaper of the ruling militia, also said a cargo plane had flown the aid to Kolyab airbase in neighbouring Tajikistan, which the Taliban says is used by Masood to get military supplies in.

"According to the local media reports, France has provided financial and military aid to the opposition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," the daily said, without giving specific details.

"The said assistance has been sent aboard a transport plane to Kolyab in Tajikistan," said the newspaper, published here.

The Taliban militia, which controls most of Afghanistan, started openly accusing Paris of backing Masood last month after a visit by a political delegation from Paris comprising two right-wing figures to opposition areas.

The French foreign ministry then issued a statement saying the visit

to Masood's stronghold of Panjsher Valley, 100 kilometres north of here, by Brice Lalonde from the Generation Ecologie party and former finance minister Alain Madelin from the Democratic Party was a private undertaking and not officially authorized.

"Observers believe that Masood has for long been in contact with France and Russia, without the assistance of which he cannot survive," the daily said.

The militia's Radio Shariat also claimed on Friday night that senior officials from Iran, Russia and India met recently in Kolyab to coordinate their aid to the opposition leader.

The Taliban accuses the three of supporting Masood.

The meeting focussed on how to help Masood protect his domain from the attacking Taliban forces, it said.

According to the station, Moscow undertook to send more military supplies, Tehran promised to offer more financial and logistic assistance and India to give "other aid".—AFP

Kabul ready for talks on terrorism

ISLAMABAD, Oct 11: The Taliban leader said on Monday he was ready for talks with anyone on the fight against terrorism, but he demanded that a clear distinction be made between terrorists and freedom fighters.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready to engage in talks with everyone on combating terrorism in the world," Mulla Mohammad Omar said in a statement carried by the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

But he added that the trend "not to distinguish between terrorists and Mujahideen (freedom fighters) is something distant from justice."

The United States and other countries should "stop maligning Mujahideen as terrorists," he said.

"Afghanistan has never been a centre or sanctuary of terrorism in its history. We are neither terrorists nor do we support any terrorism," the Taliban's Amirul Momineen said.

Omar's statement contained no reference to Islamabad's concerns over involvement of militants trained at camps in Afghanistan in sectarian violence in Pakistan.

—AFP

DAWN

10 OCT 1999

DAWN

12 OCT 1999

PROFILES IN POLITICS



IKRAM ULLAH

24 OCT 1999

In his address to the nation on 17th October 1999, the Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf made a very important foreign policy statement. "I wish to reassure the international community that there is no change in our foreign policy. We will continue to honour international obligations and commitments as in the past. It will remain our constant endeavour to promote peace and stability in our region.

We would like to maintain our abiding policy of friendship and co-operation with all countries. The strengthening of brotherly ties with the Islamic countries will be a central pillar of our foreign policy. We shall continue our efforts to achieve a just and peaceful solution in Afghanistan. We wish to see a truly representative government in Kabul. We will maintain and further reinforce our traditional and time-tested friendship and co-operation with China. We attach the highest importance to our friendly relations with all major powers, especially the United States."

In the backdrop of the above framework, it is intended to analyze the present stalemate in Afghanistan, both on the military and political fronts, and try to seek a practical solution which is "just and peaceful" and helps in the establishment of "a truly representative government in Kabul."

As stated by Foreign Secretary, Shamshad Ahmed Khan, repeatedly the establishment of peace in Afghanistan is a priority of Pakistan's foreign policy agenda as it is vital not only reasons of national security but also because it is a land link with the Central Asian Republics, trade with which holds the key to Pakistan's economic progress and development during the days ahead. Those regional and international who would not like to see Pakistan progress are compounding the problems in Afghanistan, including the present civil war which has defied any solution either through dialogue or war.

Stalemate in Afghanistan

One does not have to go into the history of the series of political dialogue, agreements, declarations and proclamations of peace made during the last ten years. Since the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghan soil and the signing of the Geneva Accord, differences over sharing of power between various ethnic factions eventually led to warlordism. The subsequent civil war pushed the country into a socio-economic collapse - industrial units were razed to the ground, universities and colleges were shut down, hospitals were bombed and the traditional tribal social order gave way to warlordism. Whether it is Afghanistan, Iran, Indonesia or Pakistan you cannot keep the masses to accept tyranny for ever. This was the force which gave birth to the Taliban movement.

Last year, the Taliban stormed into the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif bringing to an end the bulk of the resistance offered by the Northern Alliance led by Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani. Most of us seem to have forgotten that the Pakistan Embassy at Kabul was torched and razed to the ground during the Rabbani regime. Prof Rabbani had declared in Mecca that he would step down from the Presidency at the end of his term, but blinded by power, he went back on his words after reaching Kabul. The rest is history.

After the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif and end of resistance to the Taliban in the Hazara dominated province of Bamiyan, the backbone of Hizb-e-Wahdat, was also brought into the fold by the Taliban. Out of 32 provinces, 28 came under the Taliban administrative control where law and order was restored and life was brought to normalcy. The main method of doing so was by disarming the people. By putting an end to violence and also providing clean administration free of corruption, the Taliban earned support of the masses.

The ground reality and the peace under Taliban rule should have been enough to convince the UN and world powers but vested interests influence the US dominated UN to continue to recognize the ousted Professor Rabbani's as the legal government of Afghanistan. Ignoring the Taliban's claim on various grounds such as violation of human rights, denying education and jobs opportunities to women, and finally promoting terrorism with reference to the protection provided to Osama Bin Laden by the Taliban. The West does not pay any heed to the pumping in of military hardware to Ahmed Shah Masood, the only remnant of the Northern Alliance.

The Afghan Foreign Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan highlighted this situation on 19th August, 1998 at a Press conference, attended by representatives of the UN special mission for Afghanistan, BBC, French Press, and other members of the international media. Mullah Hassan held foreign intervention to be responsible for the ongoing military and political stalemate in the country. He pointed his finger at India, Russia, and Iran. He said dozens of senior Indian army officers and technicians assist Ahmed Shah Masood inside Afghanistan and New Delhi provides funds to support the Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani's embassies and other missions abroad while Rabbani himself is unable to make his two ends meet.

There was ample evidence, according to the Taliban Foreign Minister, which proves that military support is coming from Moscow both through land and air to anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Mullah Hassan also alleged that Iran was also openly following the policy of overt interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan through large scale supply of military hardware to Hazara Jatt in Bamiyan province and also to the Northern Alliance. Mullah Hassan deplored that the international community had not raised a finger to stop this foreign intervention.

The reported capture of Iranian military hardware at Mazar-e-Sharif and similar military equipment detected in Kirgistan on its way to Afghanistan don't leave much doubt that but for this outside military support and diplomatic umbrella provided by the UN, USA, Russia, India and other western countries, the present resistance by Ahmed Shah Masood would have ended long ago. The Northern Alliance at the political level has already virtually crumbled with the retirement of old *jehad* leaders like Nabi Mohammadi, Younas Khalid, and Gulbadin Hikmat Yar, who are leading luxurious lives.

At present it is only Ahmed Shah Masood's guns, which are preventing peace in Afghanistan. All the allegations made by India, Russia, Iran, and in a subtle way by USA about Pakistani military intervention in Afghanistan have been belied by no less a person than Ahmed Shah Masood himself, who, only a week ago declared that there was no Pakistan military presence inside Afghanistan.

This proves beyond any doubt that Pakistan is held in respect not only by the Taliban but also by the opposing factions, presently symbolized by Ahmed Shah Masood.

To further strengthen this credibility, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed Khan held a Press briefing, recently, where he stressed upon the Taliban leadership to move towards the establishment of a representative government at Kabul in accordance with the Afghan policy initiative stated in General Musharraf's address on 17th October, 1999.

As a gesture of goodwill and demonstration of confidence building, the Taliban are reported to be voluntarily pulling back from certain areas of advantage in Taliqan and other vital points which were designed to besiege Ahmed Shah Masood forces in his strong-hold of Panjshir valley. It indicates a desire on the part of the Taliban not to push a military decision during this winter and pursue a policy of dialogue with Ahmed Shah Masood.

It is hoped that taking advantage of the trust that Shamshad and Rustam Shah enjoy with Masood as well as with Mullah Omar at Qandahar, General Musharraf's vision about the dawn of a permanent peace in Afghanistan may come true before the winter is over. In this connection the Taliban have already inducted four Cabinet Ministers at Kabul from the minorities: two Tajiks, one Uzbek, and one from Hazara Jatt representing Hizba-e-Wahdat. I believe that the Taliban were not averse to the idea of including more representatives from these minorities provided such candidates repent their past acts of omission and commission against the Afghan people and were willing to join the regime at Kabul with a clean conscience.

The present complexion of the ethnic groups according to 1990 estimates is: Pukhtoon 48 per cent, Tajik 20 per cent, Uzbek 15 per cent, Hazrah 7 per cent, other miscellaneous groups 10 per cent. To demonstrate the representative nature of the Taliban state structure, out of 28 provinces presently under control of the Taliban only 17 governors are Pukhtoon whereas 11 governors are from various ethnic minorities. The remaining four provinces under Northern Alliance also have non-Pukhtoon governors making the total of 15 ethnic minority governors out of total of 32 governors, which is fairly balanced representation having nearly 50 per cent Pukhtoon, and 50 per cent non-Pukhtoon governors.

The Taliban government cannot be blamed for having a totally partisan setup which denies due recognition to the other ethnic group in accordance with their respective population ratio. The present stalemate on the battlefield, therefore, offers a good opportunity to the Taliban to show magnanimity and large-heartedness towards the minority ethnic groups even at the cost of offering some sacrifice for the larger good of the Afghan people and establishment of peace in the war ravaged country.

Taliban ask Pakistan not to impose ban on transit trade

ISLAMABAD: The Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have asked Pakistan not to impose the proposed ban on Afghan Transit Trade.

The demand was made when the NWFP government proposed to exclude another 40 items from the list of Afghan Transit Trade owing to the smuggling of foreign goods to Pakistan causing great losses to the Pakistani companies. Islamabad has recently complained about the increasing smuggling of the items being taken to Afghanistan under the Afghan Transit Trade.

Although a senior spokesman of the Taliban, Maulvi Wakil Ahmed Mutawakil, did not reject the smuggling of a number of goods to Pakistan but said it was the duty of Pakistan government to monitor the border. He said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and Pakistan government have held talks on the issue and would continue the same in the future.

"Both sides have their own arguments but, I think we would eventually reach a conclusion to resolve the problems of the people of the two countries," Mutawakil said in an interview with the BBC.

He said that Pakistan authorities obviously argue that some Pakistani companies were running in loss and said that Afghanistan should import only those items required by it. But the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is of the view that it should import whatever it deems necessary and it

is the responsibility and duty of the Pakistan government to monitor the border, he observed.

Afghanistan, he said has borders with a number of countries and it is a general practice that the countries do free trade with each other. "It does not mean that we should import only those items which are used in Afghanistan. It is their duty to supervise their border," the spokesman said.

He said that Taliban have held high-level and low-level talks with Pakistan on the issue.

"We have time and again got goods released from the Pakistan government. We have discharged our responsibilities to every possible extent. We would use every possible mean to resolve their problems," said Mutawakil.

He said that he did not think the imposition of ban on the Afghan transit trade would be Pakistan's final decision because they are at war with India but are continuing trade with them. Similarly, Afghanistan too assume the status of a bridge for Central Asia. The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan are brothers and need each other, he argued.

He dispelled the impression that Pakistan's steps would have any link with the US decision to slap economic sanctions on the student militia because the issue of Afghan transit trade has been continuing since long.—NNI

Taliban flay France for military aid to opposition

KABUL, Oct 20: The Taliban have accused France of sending two plane loads of military aid to opposition leader Ahmad Shah Masood, official sources said in a report published on Wednesday.

The official Taliban Shariat weekly said two planes had airlifted aid to Kulyab airbase in neighbouring Tajikistan, which the Taliban believe Masood uses as a supply base.

"According to a reliable news agency, two planes carrying arms and ammunition landed in Kulyab airport," it said. No independent confirmation was immediately available, but a spokeswoman for the French foreign ministry in Paris denied the report.

Shariat said the French military supplies arrived at opposition bases after a senior delegation from Masood visited Paris to seek "urgent military aid", the weekly said. They were then taken to the Panjsher Valley or to Taloqan, two remaining strongholds of the anti-Taliban groups battling the militia in northeastern Afghanistan, it added.

"We deny the allegations about any French military aid to commander Masood," said French foreign ministry spokeswoman Anne Gazeau Secret.

"Because of the humanitarian crisis caused by the Taliban's offensive in the Shamali region last July, France sent on Aug 12 a plane loaded with humanitarian aid to Dushanbe. "This aid was taken by a non-governmental organization in the Pansher and distributed," she added.

However, it was not the first such accusation by the Taliban. Earlier this month another Taliban official daily alleged that French aid for Masood had reached Kulyab airbase aboard a cargo plane.—AFP

Kabul rejects US criticism over women

KABUL, Oct 10: The ruling Taliban militia on Sunday rejected US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's criticism of women's rights in Afghanistan as slander.

Albright was spreading "slanders" by frequently raising the issue of the Afghan women in a bid to pursue her own political objectives, the militia's official organ, the Shariat weekly, said. "It will be true if we say that she uses human rights as a political shield and politically manipulates the issue," it said.

Albright, addressing the California Governor's Conference for Women last Tuesday, accused the Taliban of treating women as chattel.

She condemned the Taliban for being "determined to drag Afghan

women back from the dawn of the 21st century to somewhere closer to the 13th."

"She should understand that the Afghan woman is the most dignified woman the world over. In the light of the Islamic Shariah law she is kept in high esteem. "She enjoys complete dignity and protection and is not used as an animal, which was the status of women in the mediaeval west," it said.

Accusing Albright of distorting events in Afghanistan and spreading "poisonous propaganda" to hatch "conspiracies" against the Taliban, the weekly said if she really sympathized with Afghan women she should have sent them some medicines, clothes and food.—AFP

Taliban ready for talks on curbing terrorism

We do not support terrorism, says Omar

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Afghanistan's Taliban leader said Monday he was ready for talks with anyone on the fight against terrorism, but he demanded a clear distinction be made between terrorists and freedom fighters.

'The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready to engage in talks with everyone on combating terrorism in the world,' Mullah Mohammed Omar said in a statement carried by the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

But he added that the trend 'not to distinguish between terrorists and Mujahideen is something distant from justice.'

The United States and other countries should 'stop maligning Mujahideen as terrorists,' he said.

'Afghanistan has never been a center or sanctuary of terrorism in its history. We are neither terrorists nor do we support any terrorism,' the Taliban's Amirul Momineen said.

The world hailed Mujahideen from all over the world who flocked Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet

invasion, but when most of them returned home they were subjected to excesses, Omar said.

'Those who stayed on in Afghanistan were also maligned as terrorists,' he said. 'The world must distinguish between terrorists and Mujahideen.'

Omar's statement contained no direct reference to Islamabad's concerns over alleged involvement of militants trained at camps in Afghanistan in a wave of sectarian violence in Pakistan.

It also did not mention Osama bin Laden. The leader of pro-Taliban group Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, accused the Nawaz-led government of toeing the line of the United States.

The United States accuses the Taliban of allowing the use of its territory for the training of terrorists and planning of terrorist acts.

Washington wants the Islamic militia to extradite Osama to stand trial for allegedly masterminding the August 7, 1998 twin bombings of American embassies in East Africa.

Taliban reject UN demand to hand over Osama

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Afghanistan's ruling Taliban Saturday rejected a UN Security Council demand to hand over Osama bin Laden, a private Afghan news service reported.

But the militia proposed a meeting of religious scholars from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and a third Islamic nation it did not name to discuss the demand and arrive at a 'unanimous decision.'

'We will not hand over Osama bin Laden to anybody until a solution is found in accordance with the principles of Islam,' a spokesman told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP).

The spokesman did not say whether it had approached anyone in connection with the proposed meeting or when and where the militia wanted it to be held.

He slammed the UN decision to impose sanctions as a 'cruel and unjust' move, made under 'pressure' from the United States.

The spokesman said it was keeping open its past offer of talks with the United States or any other country on the bin Laden issue. 'We remain ready for talks.'

He reiterated the Taliban position that no one had provided any evidence to the militia about bin Laden's alleged involvement in terrorism.

The UN Security Council decided on Friday to impose sanctions on the Taliban movement unless it handed over the indicted Saudi terrorist within 30 days.

The council passed a resolution that noted bin Laden and his associates had been indicted in the United States for the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998.

The resolution was adopted unanimously despite reservations about sanctions expressed by Malaysia and

Bahrain, the two Muslim countries among the 15 council members.

After the vote, China voiced its traditional opposition on principle to the use of sanctions.

The resolution, sponsored by the US, demands the Taliban hand over bin Laden 'without further delay to a country where he has been indicted' or where he would be brought to justice.

Unless it does so by November 14, the resolution requires UN member states to 'deny permission for any aircraft to take off from or land in their territory if it is owned, leased or operated by or on behalf of the Taliban.'

States are also required to 'freeze funds and other financial resources, including funds generated from property owned or controlled directly by the Taliban.'

Exemptions to the ban on flights can be made for humanitarian reasons or to allow Muslims to perform *hajj*.

Afghan Deputy Commerce Minister Faiz Mohammad Faizan said Washington should have opened negotiations with the Taliban before pushing for sanctions. 'The United States has jumped from the first option to the hundredth one,' he said.

NATION

17 OCT 1998

NATION

12 OCT 1998

NATION 27 OCT 1999

Taliban protest to Annan over seat in UN

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's ruling Taliban Tuesday protested to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan over giving the Afghan seat at the world body to the government they ousted four years ago.

In a letter to Annan, Taliban Foreign Minister Mulla Mohammad Hassan Akhund also accused the UN of treating the Taliban unfairly despite its control over most of Afghanistan, including the capital, Kabul.

'The United Nations has never ever issued a just decision regarding Afghanistan,' he said in the letter, released here.

The letter condemned the UN Credentials Committee's decision to recognize the government of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani once again as a 'disrespect and insult' to the Afghan people.

'Such decisions will further embolden the opposition battling the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (established by Taliban) and will thus help continuation of fighting in Afghanistan,' it said.

'This would further discredit the world body, which is not on good terms with the Taliban over various issues.'

'It is a matter of regret for the Islamic Emirate and the people of Afghanistan to hear that Afghanistan's UN seat has been given to the ousted regime of Rabbani for another year.'

A senior opposition spokesman, Abdullah (eds: one name), said the UN credentials committee took the 'predictable' decision on October 19 and that it had been confirmed by the General Assembly.

'We are grateful for this realistic approach of the General Assembly

which decided Afghanistan's seat on Monday in our favour with overwhelming majority,' Abdullah said, speaking from London.

'It is a new message to the Taliban that they are going deeper into international isolation,' Abdullah said the reason the Taliban's petition was turned down was their 'belief' in war as a solution, violation of human rights and their stance on the issues of narcotics and terrorism.

The Taliban religious militia ejected Rabbani's government from Kabul in September 1996 two years after their rise from Koranic schools in southern Afghanistan and Pakistan.

'Having more territory is not the only criteria for recognition,' Abdullah said. The anti-Taliban alliance enjoys diplomatic backing around the world, with the Taliban government recognised so

far only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Islamic militia has barred women from jobs and education and compelled them to be covered from head to toe when going out of their homes.

Men in the militia-held areas have to wear untrimmed beards, cover their heads and shun western fashion and hairstyles.

Earlier this month the UN Security Council unanimously decided to slap sanctions against the Taliban regime unless it handed over Saudi millionaire alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden, who lives in Afghanistan as a guest of the militia.

Bin Laden, a Saudi dissident, has been indicted in the United States for his alleged role in the August 1998 twin bombings of US embassies in East Africa that killed more than 200 people.

Taliban offer to negotiate with US on Osama

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia on Saturday said it was ready for talks with the United States on the thorny issue of Osama bin Laden.

Information Minister Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a statement that the Taliban wanted the issue to be resolved through high-level negotiations.

'The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready to talk with the United States on the issue of Osama bin Laden,' he said, adding Kabul favoured good relations with Washington.

'We want the issue of Osama bin Laden to be resolved in a way in which the Islamic laws and Afghan culture are respected and the United States' concerns are also completely satisfied,' the minister said.

He said the Taliban, who control most of Afghanistan, would welcome it if Washington proposed a negotiated settlement instead of 'threats and pressure'.

Osama, who has been indicted in the United States for his alleged role in the August 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, lives in Afghanistan as a 'guest' of the Islamic militia.

On October 15, the UN Security Council asked all countries to freeze funds and ban the Taliban aircraft unless Osama was handed over by November 14.

The Taliban militia rejected the demand and called the sanctions 'cruel and unjust.'

Taliban Foreign Minister Mulla Hassan, in a letter to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, has said handing over Osama was like 'giving up one of the pillars of Islam.'

NATION

27 OCT 1999

Taliban urge UN to exclude postal service from sanctions

KABUL, Oct 24: The ruling Taliban on Sunday appealed to the United Nations to exclude the postal services from its sanctions on Afghanistan over the alleged Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden.

The UN Security Council said the proposed curbs would come into force in mid-November if the militia failed to deliver bin Laden for trial in the United States on terrorism charges.

The country's postal department said the sanctions would deny communication between thousands of families inside the country and abroad if they covered the postal services also.

"We appeal to the UN Security Council to revise its resolution ... and let the postal administration of Afghanistan to offer as before services to its clients in over 189 countries," it said.

The UN Council on October 15 unanimously adopted a resolution calling for aviation and financial sanctions unless the Taliban hand-

ed over bin Laden, indicted by Washington for terrorist activities within 30 days.

The sanctions also bar the operation of the landlocked country's national carrier Ariana Afghan Airlines.

The militia has dismissed the sanctions as unjustified.

The ban on the Ariana flights, will effectively stop the delivery of overseas mail, the free passage of which has been "guaranteed in article one of the constitution of the Universal Postal Union," the country's postal department said.

Afghanistan as member of the UPU has postal ties with 189 countries and has always allowed foreign post to freely pass through its territory, it said.

Deputy communications minister, Mulla Allah Dad Tabib, in a separate letter to the UPU board directors pleaded for a solution to the problem, which has stirred concern among the Afghan people.—AFP

DAWN 25 OCT 1999

Taliban want to improve ties with US

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Afghanistan's new foreign minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkel said Thursday his top priority would be to remove misgivings about the Taliban and improve relations with the US and other western countries.

"The western world harbours a lot of suspicions about the Taliban. My main task will be to remove these misunderstandings," Mutawakkel told the Afghan Islamic Press.

Mutawakkel, a former advisor and chief Taliban spokesman, replaced Mulla Mohammad Hassan Akhund in a major reshuffle announced by the militia's chief Mulla Mohammad Omar late Wednesday.

He said Taliban policies had been 'misrepresented' and a 'distorted' view about the militia had been projected abroad.

"We are part of this world and we want to live together with others," he told the Pakistan-based private news service.

Calling for better ties with Islamic countries and the international community, Mutawakkel said: "I will exert special efforts to improve our relations with the United States."

However he said Washington should realise that the 'improvement can come

when both sides take reciprocal steps.' Washington's relations with the hard-line militia have been strained over Taliban's refusal to hand over Osama bin Laden for allegedly masterminding terrorist acts against the United States.

"The issue of Osama can be resolved if the United States gives up the policy of pressure and coercion," he added.

He said the Taliban had imposed restrictions on Osama and the Saudi militiaire can not use Afghan soil for any activity against any country.

He said a Taliban delegation at a recent meeting with US officials in Washington had explained that the extradition of Osama was an Islamic issue and its solution should be found by Islamic scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and a third Muslim country which he did not name.

The Taliban administration desired good relations with all its neighbours, he said adding that it would like to further strengthen ties with Pakistan.

The Taliban militia which seized Kabul in 1996 has so far been recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Other countries still deal with the ousted government of former President Burhanuddin Rabbani, which also holds Afghanistan's seat at the United Nations.

NATION

'Osama not being handed over to US'

KABUL, Oct 28: The Taliban on Thursday denied reports they were poised to hand over Osama bin Laden because of US pressure and the threat of imminent UN sanctions.

"There has been no such agreement," newly appointed Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil Muttawakil told the independent Afghan news agency, AIP.

"The reports which say that Taliban are about to hand over Osama or extradite him are totally baseless. We have no intention as such," said Tayeb Agha, a Taliban spokesman reached by telephone in the movement's southern city of Kandahar.

He was reacting to reports which said that the Taliban and the United States had reached agreement under which Bin Laden, who is living in hiding in Afghanistan, would be handed over to face trial.

RELATIONS WITH MUSLIM COUNTRIES: Afghanistan's new foreign minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkel said on Thursday that

his top priority would be to remove misgivings about the Taliban and improve relations with the US and other western countries.

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Calling for better ties with Islamic countries and the international community, Mutawakkel said: "I will exert special efforts to improve our relations with the United States."—AFP

DAWN 29 OCT 1999

Kabul protests as UN seat given to ex-Rabbani regime

KABUL, Oct 26: Afghanistan's ruling Taliban on Tuesday protested to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan over giving the Afghan seat at the world body to the government they had ousted four years ago.

In a letter to Annan, Taliban Foreign Minister Mulla Mohammad Hassan Akhund also accused the UN of treating the Taliban unfairly despite its control over most of Afghanistan, including the capital, Kabul.

"The United Nations has never ever issued a just decision regarding Afghanistan," he said in the letter, released here.

The letter condemned the UN Credentials Committee's decision to

recognize the government of ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani once again as a "disrespect and insult" to the Afghan people.

"Such decisions will further embolden the opposition battling the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (established by Taliban) and will thus help continuation of fighting in Afghanistan," it said.

"This would further discredit the world body, which is not on good terms with the Taliban over various issues.

"It is a matter of regret for the Islamic Emirate and the people of Afghanistan to hear that Afghanistan's UN seat has been given to the ousted regime of Rabbani for another year."—AFP

DAWN

27 OCT 1999

Repatriation of Afghans continues

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR – Repatriation of the refugees from both the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran is in progress.

However, the repatriation of refugees from Pakistan is voluntarily while Iranian authorities are forcibly evicting the Afghans. According to the UN weekly update issued here on Wednesday, 610 Afghan refugees families returned from NWFP to Afghanistan in return of the UNHCR standard repatriation package in Jalalabad and Khost. Another 940 individuals have returned from Baluchistan province to their areas of origin in Jowzjan, Balkh, Faryab and Kandahar provinces in northern Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, some 3,300 unregistered Afghan refugees returned from Iran, through Islam Qala border. An additional 639 individuals returned voluntarily. Some 1,600 individuals returned via this border. The report further states that the deportations from Iran also continue. 102 families along with 2,274 individuals were deported via Nalooki/Zaranj border between Afghanistan and Iran.

Besides encouraging the repatriation, the UNHCR is also struggling encourage of their reintegration. In this connection, a project that assisted 121 returnees to build shelter in Anbar Khana village of Nangarhar was implemented. Another shelter project for 258 returnee was undertaken in Ghorian district of Herat province.

DAWN

28 OCT 1989

Over 500 refugees return to Afghanistan

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR – More than 500 Afghan Refugees on Thursday returned to their home village inside Afghanistan after remaining in exile for a period of one year in Pakistan, states the UNHCR Press release issued here on Thursday.

The Afghan refugees have been sent back to their motherland through the UNHCR provided trucks. 27 trucks carrying the returning refugees and their belongings, departed at the day break from Azakhel and Mera Kachori refugees camp of Nowshera district and entered Afghanistan this morning via Torkham border, it added.

The majority of the refugees are returning to village Batikot near Rodat in the border Nangarhar province. The refugees have availed the UNHCR standard repatriation package which includes Rs 5,000 cash amount, 300 kilograms of wheat and one plastic sheet for each family.

Similarly, the refugees are ensured potable water and shelter in their home villages. A field team of the UNHCR Sub-Office Jalalabad escorted the returning refugees to their homes. The latest departure brings the total number of refugees from North West Frontier Province to 55,500 in current year.

NATION

08 OCT 1989

Afghans mum over Shujat, Shahbaz's allegations

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR –Although the statements of Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Shujat Hussain regarding increasing terrorism in Afghanistan were widely debated among Afghans yet majority of them is reluctant to comment on this issue.

Most of the leading Afghan elites and intellectuals are either on foreign visits or reluctant to express their views on this matter. In fact, their 20-year-long experiences proved that politicians have no any role in running Afghan affairs and those who are commanding the Afghan policies are firm on their positions whatever may be outcomes of the strange pulling for power between the politicians.

However, majority of the Afghans are unanimous in their opposition against the Taliban. However, on the issue of Arab militants, some of the warring elements are still hopeful of the Islamic state in the region. Such people although denouncing Taliban for some of their political policies but at the same time are also condemn the global stand against Arab and other Muslim militants, staying inside Afghanistan.

Dr. Habib Ullah Farahmand, an Afghan writer, when approached said that as a result of internal fighting in 1992, terrorists and militants from all over entered Afghanistan where the volatile situation was beneficial for them.

"What the Pakistani authorities are saying now, we had predicted it one decade ago," he remarked, adding that on such grounds they are in favour of a negotiated solution to the conflict which is possible through convening a meeting of the Loya Jirga.

NATION

07 OCT 1989

Thousands of Afghans face severe winter

KABUL, Oct 11: The fast-approaching Afghan winter is threatening thousands of villagers displaced from north of Kabul to the opposition stronghold of the Panjsher valley, the United Nations office here has said.

According to the latest UN weekly update, an international mission recently visited the valley, 100kms from here, where it reported some of the displaced were still living outdoors and sanitary arrangements are almost non-existent.

A new census has put the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Panjsher at around 60,000 to 65,000, it added.

The UN warned the access routes to the valley would be closed in one or two months with the onslaught of winter before a sufficient amount of relief aid could be transported.

"In addition, the weather in Panjsher Valley is deteriorating. As the area gets colder, the displaced are beset by rain, while the highest elevations have already seen unseasonably early snowfall," the UN document said.

A refugee crisis broke after the ruling Taliban launched their major summer offensive on July 28 to dislodge supporters of the opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood from the Shamali plain and Parwan province north of here.

Part of the local population, mostly farmers, fled to Panjsher along with Masood's retreating soldiers, while the rest were forced out of their homes and bused to Kabul by the Taliban.

The UN has accused the Taliban of pursuing a scorched earth policy in Shamali, a charge the ruling militia denies.

"Mission members found that the internally displaced, especially those from the frontline areas, have reported very serious and systematic violations of their human rights," the UN update said, without further elaboration.

Public buildings are overcrowded and the displaced are ill-equipped to cope with the climate of the valley situated in the Hindu Kush mountain ranges, famous for its freezing winter and heavy snowfall, it added.

"Shelter remains an immediate and high priority requirement," it said, adding one of the two humanitarian access routes to the valley has already been cut due to fighting in adjacent Takhar province.—AFP

Refugees settled in Iran facing problems

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR — The Afghan refugees settled in neighbouring Islamic Republic of Iran are under tremendous pressure of the authorities due to hostilities between Kabul and Tehran.

The United Nations weekly update issued here at Peshawar on Tuesday reveals that so far 1.4 million Afghan refugees are still remain in Iran. But now due to increasing differences between the hardline rulers of both the countries, these refugees are under pressure to leave Iran.

About the repatriation process from Iran, the reports reveal that between January and September 1999, the UNHCR has registered 41,000 people who had entered Afghanistan.

It further states that in addition, a small population of about 10,000 Internally Displaced (IDP's) remained in camps around Herat out of the large group which fled from the front line in Faryab and Badghis provinces during 1997-98, Herat is bordering with the Islamic Republic of Iran and considered the first venue for the deportees from that neighbouring country.

Meanwhile, 17 families/81 individuals have returned from Pakistan's Baluchistan province to their areas of origin in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

It further informs that last week, some 146 registered and 2,089 unregistered Afghan refugees returned from Iran through Islam Qala border crossing point. Additionally, 62 families have returned voluntarily with UNHCR facilitating their return from Iran via Milak crossing point into Zaranj of Nimroz province.

NATION

20 OCT 1999

Afghan children demand peace

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: A group of Afghan students on Friday organized a painting contest, advocating the culture of non-violence and pleading peace. T-shirts, bearing peace symbol, dove, were presented to 15 Afghan refugee children whose drawings of their vision of peace were selected from over 100 pieces.

The UN coordinator for Afghanistan Erick de Mul presented white colour T-shirts to the children.

A group of Afghan artists selected the 15 drawings they felt best conveyed the image of peace.

In a unique initiative with refugee schools for Afghans in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, the non-violence team, a small organization composed entirely of volunteers, asked the children what they felt peace would be like. The team aims to build a culture of peace among Afghan refugees children who attend schools in the twin cities.—NNI

Afghan babies being denied education

ISLAMABAD (PPI) — The Afghan babies living in various refugee camps in Pakistan are not allowed by their mothers to study after class four whereas boys are allowed education upto class 10 and then sent to religious institutions for religious education. According to a survey report, ninety per cent of the Afghan babies in refugee camps in Pakistan are denied their basic right of education due to the typical social values. While boys are allowed education upto class 10 and afterward sent to the nearest religious institution for religious education. Afghan children are facing hardships particularly after the international community cut aid to the refugees. Several schools set up in refugee camps in the past have been closed following the international community cut aid to the refugees.

DAWN 09 OCT 1999

DAWN 12 OCT 1999

NATION 10 OCT 1999

New govt asked to help bring peace in Kabul

ISLAMABAD (NNI) - The Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) has expressed hope that the new rulers of Pakistan would help establish durable peace and an elected government in the neighbouring Afghanistan.

A Press release of the group said Sunday that instability in Pakistan, failure of successive governments, corruption and brewing feuds amongst the political parties had since long forced the state elements and intelligentsia to invite the Army to move in and clean the mess. Among the army top brass, many voices supported this idea, the statement said.

"Afghans expect from the new government to review the failed policies of the past, refrain from supporting a certain group in Afghanistan, assess the Afghanistan crisis independently and, above all, help their Afghan brothers in restoration of durable peace and establishment of an elected government. This

Government, the statement said, could also help in bringing in a cease-fire ending an atmosphere of trust and understanding among Afghan groups and setting up of an interim government till an elected government is installed.

"The new government should deal with Afghans without any discrimination, not favouring one group to the extent of allowing it to take Pakistani nationals in hoards to Afghanistan for fighting and preventing others from participating in the funeral of their relatives."

"It should also press for an agreement with the neighbouring countries to stop interference in the affairs of Afghanistan and halt the flow of arms to the groups involved in the fighting so that the Afghans can sort out their difference without outside interference," the HIA added.

It said that the widespread support of the Army action suggested that the people of Afghanistan expected from Nawaz government to end Benazir's one-sided policy of support to a group. "But instead of taking keen interest in helping the Afghans put an end to the fighting and set up a government of their own choice, the Nawaz government continued in line with the past record during his first term, when he,

ple of Pakistan were done with the political parties who failed to address the internal and external problems. "It also signifies the acknowledgement of the people that Pakistan has witnessed stability only under the Army rule."

The people of Pakistan are very sensitive to US interference in their affairs and have shown time and again great resentment over hobnobbing of their politicians with Washington known for its pro-Indian policy particularly over the issue of Kashmir, the statement further said.

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at the behest of the Americans support ed the coalition of Rabbani with the communists after the downfall of Masood as Defence Minister of Afghanistan, the group regretted. The statement said Nawaz Sharif ordered the closure of the office of other parties to prevent them from any kind of activities against the coalition of Rabbani but allowed Americans when second stint, he continued to support Taliban with the communists. In his relations deteriorated with Taliban, to use Pakistan's airspace in support ment of bases inside Afghanistan," it added.

The HIA said, that had it not been for the fear of backlash from the people, he would have allowed the Americans to stage even a ground attack from Pakistani soil in the garb of Operation

NATION

NATION
21 OCT 1999

Hekmatyar asks Pakistan to review Afghan policy

TEHRAN (PPI) - Central Amir of Hizb-e-Islami, Afghanistan, Engineer Gulbadin Hekmatyar has expressed the hope that new military administration of Pakistan headed by Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf will review its policy towards Afghanistan.

In an interview with VOA Hekmatyar, who is presently living in Iran called upon the new administration to begin the process of creating understanding among the Afghans.

He said "we expect the new Pakistani government to adopt a new policy on Afghanistan and review the previous policies. Nawaz Sharif was expected to review the policy of Benazir Bhutto but regrettably he continued the same policy.

Instead of supporting a particular group, insist on continuation of war and provide support to the warring groups, it should work for restoration of peace in Afghanistan and creating an understanding among the Afghans."

He also counted Nawaz Sharif's closeness with the United States as the main reason of his ouster. The United States also wanted a puppet government in Afghanistan, he observed.

He said that such a change was already expected in Pakistan because on the one hand differences between the army and Nawaz Sharif were increas-

ing day by day and on the other hand Pakistani people were not pleased with him.

The people got more disheartened when Nawaz Sharif got further closer to the United States and took some steps at the call of Washington, he said.

He said when the deposed prime minister went to Washington and made decision about Kashmir under the US pressure and withdrew Kashmiri Mujahideen from Kargil both the people and the army got annoyed with him since that it was thought that some change would come in Pakistan.

Hekmatyar said that when United States fired Cruise missiles on Afghanistan many Pakistanis thought that it cannot be without Islamabad's consent.

There is a serious anti-US feeling among the Pakistanis most serious than any country of the region. Every government which gets closer to Washington loses its popularity in Pakistan and the army is also a part of the nation and this is a reaction against US pressure, he maintained.

He said Pakistan's Afghan policy was also to please the United States. After the fall of Najib Pakistan first supported the joint administration of Rabbani and the communists and later started supporting the Taliban.

To a question about Osama Bin Laden

issue he said the main target of the Americans is not Bin Laden. The United States wants a government of their choice in Kabul.

They expected the Taliban to form a government of their liking. But it did not happen. But now they want to pressurize Taliban to agree them a government of American choice, he said.

"I think as deep as US pressurize Taliban, the latter will get more and more popular. It will not harm. The main objective of the Americans is not to let set up an Islamic government in Kabul.

If they were supporting the United Front it was for this very purpose and if they supported Taliban it was for this purpose and now that they oppose Taliban it is for the same purpose.

Besides there are also economic problems.

US want to reach to the oil reserves of Central Asia through Afghanistan. They still fear that Russia may rise as a big power. The strategic location of Afghanistan is very important. Therefore, the Americans want a puppet regime in Kabul," he added.

He observed that Afghan problem cannot be solved through war and it should be resolved by the Afghan themselves without any pressure and the meetings held in Rome or Cyprus will make no difference.

COAS urged to invite Afghans for talks

No change in Pak-Afghan ties: Taliban

ISLAMABAD (NNI) - The Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) Thursday called upon General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of Pakistan, to invite all Afghan parties and groups for negotiations and establish a consensus government in Kabul.

A Hizb-e-Islami statement lent complete support to remarks of General Pervez Musharraf regarding the formation of an elected government in Afghanistan. "We offer our utmost support and cooperation in achieving this purpose and we strongly believe that only free and fair general elections could solve the conflict of Afghanistan," the statement said.

The group proposed that during the period of transition all provincial administrations are established and run by those forces, whoever control those areas presently and that they fully obey and cooperate with the central interim government.

"The interim setup should control all land and airports, borders, highways, banks, currency, taxes, foreign missions, and the armed forces," it added. The Hizb-e-Afghanistan further demanded general elections to be held after one year.

Defining its conditions for the general elections, the Afghan group proposed: "Election of a president with the majority vote; formation of a parliament based on proportional representation; elected government to have the privilege of drafting a constitution for the country; establishment of an independent Election Commission to supervise

general elections."

Hizb-e-Islami statement said the Taliban Ameer-ul-Momineen may continue in the office until a new president is elected and Taliban keep in their control over the areas that presently hold. It further demanded setting up of administrations in Takhar, Badakhshan and Parwan provinces in consultation with the prominent and renowned personalities of those provinces.

Referring to the Osama bin Laden, it said the issue may be referred to the elected parliament. The groups further proposed establishment of a national army and return of all types of weapons to it.

Meanwhile, the Peshawar-based Shoor-e-Tafahum (Council for National Consensus and Understanding of Afghanistan) has welcomed the changes in Pakistan and hoped that the new government would support a national government in Afghanistan.

"We are watching the situation very closely. We think the present change will have positive impact on Afghanistan because the remarks of the new leaders show that they want a national and representative government in Afghanistan. We are optimistic," the leader of the council, Pir Mohammad Eimadi told the BBC. He expressed the hope that the new leadership of Pakistan would be sincere in its intentions and realise that no government is workable in Afghanistan without the will of the nation. "So, if they want to strengthen relations with Afghanistan that will be with a national government."

HIA asks Pakistan to invite Afghan groups for talks

ISLAMABAD, Oct 21: The Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) on Thursday called upon Gen Pervez Musharraf, the chief executive of Pakistan, to invite all Afghan parties and groups for negotiations so that a consensus government could be established in Kabul.

A statement issued by the HIA lent complete support to the remarks of Gen Pervez Musharraf regarding the formation of an elected government in Afghanistan.

"We offer our utmost support and cooperation in achieving this purpose, and we strongly believe that only free and fair general elections could solve the conflict of Afghanistan," the statement said.

The group proposed that during the period of transition all provincial administrations be established and run by those forces which control their areas at present, and that they fully obey and cooperate with

the central interim government. "The interim set-up should control all land bases and airports, borders, highways, banks, currency, taxes, foreign missions, and the armed forces," it added.

The HIA demanded that general elections be held after one year. Defining its conditions for the general elections, the Afghan group proposed: "Election of a president with the majority vote; formation of a parliament based on proportional representation; elected government to have the privilege of drafting a constitution for the country; establishment of an independent Election Commission to supervise general elections."

Referring to Osama bin Laden, it said the issue might be referred to the elected parliament. The group further proposed the establishment of a national army and return of all types of weapons to it.—NNI

DAWN

22 OCT 2001

NATION

UN curbs on Afghanistan to multiply problems: RAWA

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR – The Revolutionary Association Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) has said that United Nations embargo on Taliban couldn't resolve the conflict but the United Nations needs to take similar decisions against those countries having an influence over affairs of Afghanistan.

"As a result of this influence, these foreign countries are contributing to nourishing thieves in Afghanistan," it remarked through a Press communique issued here on Thursday. "What RAWA has been saying since many years, about the various fundamentalist parties and their ominous acts in Afghanistan and the region, are today proved and confirmed in a way or the other by the many countries and governments."

If the UN or other countries are talking about the economic embargo or any other restrictions on the Taliban, before imposing these policies, it would be better for us to revise their past wrong policies at least once and then give answers to the questions pertaining to growing trends of terrorism and narcotics. In this connection, it added that

majority of the Afghans have no association either with Taliban or with war lord Ahmad Shah Masud.

The declaration of economic sanctions has been referred only to treacherous the Taliban and Jihadis. It added that differentiating between Taliban and Jihadis in fact means that involved countries are trying to take one side under pressure and make the other side the "leaders" and then substitute them with the Taliban. It viewed that such restrictions have no impact on the Taliban because they have already made dumps of weapons for further destroying the war devastated Afghanistan. In this connection, the RAWA stressed on disarming of Taliban if the UN and USA are sincere in their efforts for finding out an amicable solution to the conflict.

The RAWA communique states, "Don't our people have the right to ask you for the trial of treacherous warriors who have been destroying our country for more than 10 years? Shouldn't our women, who have no way but to resort to prostitution, beggary and suicide, ask for the revenge of their husbands, brothers and fathers from the murders who were nourished extensively by finan-

cial, military and political aids of former government of Pakistan and other regional and non-regional countries, while they had committed no crime but were freedom-loving and had patriotic thoughts."

They must keep it in mind that realities would be much more bitter than what they imagine because if steps do not block the way for the Taliban soon we would see the regional countries and particularly Pakistan burning in the fire of fundamentalism. Certainly the US will be more affected than any other country by that tragedy. US should not only strive for arresting of Osama Bin Laden but also stop our country's "Ladens" not to violate human rights any more and summon them for the trial in the international courts. RAWA being a pro-democracy and pro-women rights organisation, in spite of knowing the fact that the fundamentalist Taliban would be finally punished by our people.

Pakistan and other countries in order to disarm the Taliban and pave the way for the establishment of a stable government through a loya jirga, would not be "ask" for their political interests only."

RAWA asks Pakistan to stop supporting Taliban

ISLAMABAD: The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), an Afghan women rights group, Sunday lauded Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's statement about terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and urged the government of Pakistan to stop supporting Taliban.

"This is a good beginning and Taliban and other forces must be trailed not only for the recent crimes they have committed but also for the treacheries and crimes in the last 10 years," the RAWA said.

"They (Pakistan) must stop supporting the Taliban practically as the student militia will not be able to continue with their political crimes anymore especially if Pakistan stops supporting them," a RAWA statement said.

It said Pakistan must be well aware that Taliban will kick off their masters at last and these terrorist training camps and the recent killings is the beginning. "The people, who are in power in Afghanistan

today, will not lose the chance to commit the same crimes and treacheries with disloyalty on the people of Pakistan and even other countries in the region in order to remain in power".

The RAWA said it has been telling the Pakistani authorities about Taliban's crimes, amputations of hands and feet, mass killings, destruction and snatching people's properties, but unfortunately not a single authority listened to it.

"We as the representative of our trampled women would like to ask the government of Pakistan and especially Nawaz Sharif to take lessons from his past experiences and start revealing the actual reality of the Taliban and strongly condemn them," it said.

The RAWA urged the government of Pakistan to stop economical and military aids to Taliban and never allow any Taliban or any other fundamentalist Afghan or Pakistani to damage the prestige of Pakistan in the international community.—NNI

22 OCT 1993

NATION

11 OCT 1993

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Shift in Pakistan's Afghan policy hailed

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - Former Afghan diplomat and a leader of the Afghan National Liberation Front Humayoon Shinwari while welcoming positive changes in Islamabad's Afghan policy, hoped that it could lead to restoration of peace and normalcy in the war-ravaged area.

Commenting on recent statements of Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shehbaz Sharif, Humayoon Shinwari through a press statement on Saturday said that in fact, continuing in-fighting had led to militancy in the region.

In this connection, he reminded that former Afghan President and ANLF Chief Prof. Sibghat ullah Mujaddadi had made an attempt to divert attention of the world countries some three years ago but no one took serious of his apprehensions. Now when terrorist activities reached its peak, Pakistani leaders have realised their responsibilities, which he said could be consid-

ered a good omen.

The former Afghan diplomat said that Pakistan and its people have extended unprecedented hospitality support, cooperation and helped the Afghans during and after Jihad and considered Pakistan as their second motherland. He said that majority of the Afghans is desirous of a peaceful and political solution to the Afghan conflict as it is not only beneficial for them but even could be helpful for Pakistan and its people.

In this connection, these peace-loving and Afghans are demanding an end to every sort of foreign interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. He said that it is a high time for the United Nations, Organisations of Islamic Countries, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other countries to extend help to peace loving Afghans. He called upon Taliban as well as northern alliance leaders to take an early notice of increasing uncertainty among the Pakistani brethren and global community.

NATION 19 OCT 1983

UN agencies extend help to displaced Afghan families

From Shamim Shahid

PESHAWAR - In a bid to ensure maximum protection to war displaced people from northern regions of Kabul, the United Nations agencies are struggling to adjust refugees with their relatives inside the city. In this connection, the agencies will not only assist some 5,000 displaced families but also support their relatives for their accommodation.

The weekly update of United Nations issued here on Thursday reveals that a total of 60,000 people are now estimated to have arrived in Kabul from the Shamali Valley, north of the city. The compound of former Soviet Union Embassy at Kabul, now closed for the new arrivals, is accommodating some 12,450 people included over 8,000 children. Due to lack proper housing accommodation, the WFP and other donor agencies have extended the camp for another month.

About the routine daily requirements, the report states that local Taliban authorities are providing dry bread for such people while all of the residents in the compound have received other essential non food items. Similarly, CARE, an NGO is providing safe water and sanitation service and the UNCHS is supporting various tasks. The mine awareness education is also being provided to the residents of the camp.

It further states that a new survey of the compound will take place to determine how many families have relatives in the city to see, if support was available, whether they could move out and stay with them. Families in the compound will be told that prime focus for

additional support will be given to host families outside the compound.

While there is no change in the health status of displaced persons in Kabul, host families might have trouble in shouldering their care throughout winter. Therefore, the UN may need to assist upto 5,000 displaced families in various parts of the capital. However, not all the displaced are expected to be able to leave the compound and the UN plans to winterise the facility, extend water supply and sanitation facilities and provide increase drainage in washing areas.

Apart from Kabul, the reports reveal that from 80,000 to 85,000 are still displaced in the Panjsher valley and 35,000 of them are in dire need of shelter. Similarly it estimated that 50,000 of these displaced people would need food during the coming winter. It further estimates that WFP would need 6,000 metric tones of food items for meeting requirements of these war displaced people. So far 10,000 blankets and 1,000 plastic sheets along with 608 metric tones of food in the area. However, fighting in northern region of Afghanistan delays food and other relief goods supply from the Central Asian Republics as well as from other foreign countries.

Besides, the war affected zones, the United Nations and other donor agencies are also making plan to ensure food supply and other relief goods to the war-affected people in *Mazar-i-Sharif*, *Bamyan* and other zones. In this connection, the WFP and other volunteers are busy in surveys to estimate requirements and needs of these people.

UN asks Afghan factions to avert humanitarian crisis

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD - The United Nations Monday appealed to warring sides in Afghanistan to stop fighting to avert a humanitarian crisis.

The 85,000 people sheltering in Panjsher valley were awaiting a "disaster" if the fighting did not stop before winter, Stephanie Bunker, spokeswoman for the office of UN Coordinator for Afghanistan, said at a briefing at the United Nations Information Centre.

She said the area is reached by two routes to take aid supplies. One of them is already closed, she informed.

Snow will start falling after two months that will block off the remaining routes. Ms. Bunker feared.

She said the UN was providing relief goods but it was too little for too many people. The hope lied in that either people leave the valley or UN is allowed more access, the spokeswoman said.

A slight number of people were trickling to the southern Shomali plains, in the south, to Kabul and some to Pakistan, she explained.

Shomali plains lie to the north of Afghanistan's capital of Kabul and has been a major battlefield between ruling Taliban's fighters and forces loyal to opposition commander Ahmed Shah Masood.

NATION

01 OCT 1993

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THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Annan calls for joint strategy to resolve Afghan conflict

NEW YORK: The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said that foreign interference in Afghanistan calls for a joint strategy for resolving Afghanistan problem but regretted that six plus tow group has not been able to adopt a common strategy in this connection.

In his report presented to the General Assembly, Kufi Annan spoke about the military and political events and human rights situation in Afghanistan. He recalled the inconclusive Tashkent meeting between Taliban and their opponents attended by member-countries of the Six Plus Two group.

He condemned Taliban's activities in Shomali area, describing them as against the spirit of Tashkent meeting. He recalled Taliban's

human right violations in Shomali plains.

He regretted launch of fresh military offensive by the Taliban against the opponents and said it showed the leaders of student militia still believe in military solution of the Afghan conflict. He said the Afghan problem cannot be resolved through military means. The issue, he said, can be settled only through peaceful negotiations.

Annan said that Taliban's attitude towards the civilians of Shomali was apparently dangerous and it reflected that they did not attach any significance to the concern expressed by the international community.

The UN Secretary General urged the Afghan warring factions to improve the situation and ensure safety

of civilians. He said he was concerned about the reports that thousands of foreigners, particularly students of religious schools below the age of fourteen, were present among the Taliban's ranks.

He asked all the sides to honor the Convention About Child Rights. He regretted that foreign forces were fanning flames of war in Afghanistan not only by sending arms into Afghanistan but a large number of foreigners were also taking part in the war and are also involved in chalking out military strategies. He said if this was not stopped, Afghanistan fighting would convert into a dangerous regional conflict. He supported Lakhdar Brahimi's call for reviewing UN policy and strategy on Afghanistan.—NNI

UN sounds warning over Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - A potential humanitarian 'disaster' threatens tens of thousands of Afghan refugees who have fled the civil war, a United Nations spokeswoman said Monday.

An estimated 80,000 to 85,000 refugees are living in poor conditions in mosques, schools or in the open in the opposition-held Panjsher valley, said Stephanie Bunker of the UN coordinators office.

The situation is 'turning into a potential humanitarian disaster' as winter approaches, with reports of early snow in high passes, she said.

Calling for free access for UN agencies to bring relief aid to the refugees, Bunker said the UN had supplied some blankets, food and plastic sheets but the relief was 'too little for too many'.

'The problem is getting there,' she said.

Around 200,000 villagers reportedly fled the fertile Shamali Plains linking

the Panjsher Valley with north Kabul after the Taliban militia launched its summer offensive on July 28.

Of them, 85,000 went the Panjsher valley stronghold of opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood while 55,000 fled to Kabul where more than 12,000 took refuge in the former Russian embassy compound.

Another 14,000 went to the northern provinces of Kunduz and Takhar.

UN officials last month said they were negotiating with both sides to allow food convoys access to the refugees.

But in late September fighting erupted once more when the Taliban launched a second offensive in an attempt to score strategic gains before freezing weather blocks movement in northern Afghanistan.

After five years of civil war, the Taliban control more than two-thirds of Afghanistan.

UN tightens curbs on Taliban

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 15: The Security Council decided on Friday to impose sanctions on the Taliban unless it handed over the Osama bin Laden within 30 days.

The council voted unanimously for a resolution that noted that bin Laden and his associates had been indicted in the United States for the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998.

Unless bin Laden is handed over by November 14, the resolution requires UN member states to "deny permission for any aircraft to take off from or land in their territory if it is owned, leased or operated by or on behalf of the Taliban."

States are also required to "freeze funds and other financial resources, including funds generated from property owned or controlled directly by the Taliban."—Agencies

DAWN

05 OCT 1999

DAWN

10 OCT 1999

UN for safe passage of humanitarian assistance for Afghans

ISLAMABAD (AP) - The United Nations is to negotiate with the warring Afghan factions for a safe passage to supply humanitarian assistance for the people affected in the recent fighting, a UN official in Islamabad said Friday.

Erick de Mul, UN coordinator for Afghanistan, told reporters that some 195,000 people had been displaced in the factional fighting erupted at the advent of summer.

He regretted that children were the worst affected in the internecine fighting. He said some 12,000 people displaced from the Shomali (northern) region had taken shelter in former Soviet Union Compound in Kabul. "8,000 among these displaced persons are children," he said and added, "it is unfortunate that children have to go through this terrible experience."

He said some 60,000 were displaced from Panjsher, stronghold of key anti-Taliban commander Ahmed Shah Masood, 25,000 in Hazarajat in central Afghanistan and 16,000 from Taloqan, capital of northern Takhar province.

He regretted that civilians were the main victim of the fratricidal fighting in Afghanistan. "Let civilian people alone, if you are to wage fighting," he told the rival Afghan groups.

He spoke highly of the "generosity,"

of the Afghan people who have provided accommodation to their compatriots displaced in the fighting.

Responding to a question, he said the United Nations would need 100 million to 150 million dollars for the humanitarian assistance of the displaced Afghan people.

PPI adds: United States government has donated 465,000 dollars to Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan (MAPA) to assist it in its efforts to clear thousands of mines posing serious threat to the lives of innocent Afghans across length and breadth of the war-shattered country.

"The amount is in addition to the assistance provided by US during this year for the purpose and will go a long way in achieving the noble objecting of clearing mines from Afghanistan," UN sources told the agency here Friday.

The sources replied in affirmative when asked if UN international staff which was on a mission to Panjsher and other areas to monitor the prevailing situation there had returned to Islamabad. They said that internally displaced persons (IDPs) especially those from the front line areas reported to the mission very serious and systematic violations of their human rights.

UN Council condemns Taliban

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 22: The UN Security Council on Friday condemned Taliban rulers for undermining efforts to end the civil war, but decided against explicitly criticizing Pakistan.

In a statement by its president, Russian ambassador Sergei Lavrov, the United Nations Council said the Taliban had "a primary responsibility" for the continued fighting in Afghanistan.

The statement came one week after the Council voted to impose sanctions on the Taliban unless it hands over Osama bin Laden, who was indicted in the United States on 224 counts of murder after the bombing of two United States embassies in Africa last year.

The statement expressed "deep distress" over reports that "thousands of non-Afghan nationals, mostly from religious schools" were fighting alongside the Taliban.

An earlier draft of Lavrov's statement said that these schools were "within Pakistan".

The statement condemned the Taliban for "the sheltering and training of terrorists and planning of terrorist acts" and for a series of other ills, including illegal opium cultivation, discrimination against women, summary executions and the capture and murder of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist.—AFP

NATION 00 OCT 1999

DAWN

00 OCT 1999

UN agencies working for Afghans' rehabilitation

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - The United Nations and its affiliated and coordinating relief agencies and organisations have concentrated all attention to ensure rehabilitation of the displaced civilians.

Besides, northern villages and towns of Kabul, the United Nations is facing a burden of 115,000 of IDP's from central Bamyān province. All such people, belonging to Shia school of thought, are not only affected by useless fighting but even they are facing discriminatory attitude of Taliban leaders.

The UN report reveals that some 49,000 people have been displaced from the Darra Souf of Samangan province. Of these, some 14,000 people have left the area for *Mazar-i-Sharif*, *Pull-i-Khumri* and Pakistan while some 35,000 are still displaced within the district. All of them are

staying in community halls and other temporary shelter. IT further states that some 60,000 people from Shomali are still displaced in Kabul city, with 12,000 accommodated in the compound of former Soviet Embassy. It informed that 17,575 families have been registered entering Kabul from August 8 to October 2 and 2,235 families comprising 12,362 are housed in the compound of ex-Soviet Embassy. Majority of them are women and children.

At Panjsher which is considered a strong hold of known war lord Ahmad Shah Masud, the IDP population is between 60,000 and 65,000. While number of IDP's is registered 15,000 in Pull-i-Khumri of Baghlan province and 16,000 IDP's are registered in various parts of Badakhshah province.

The United Nations sister agencies with the collaboration of other international agencies and organisations are struggling to provided maximum of

rehabilitation of these people. In this connection, the agencies are concentrating first to ensure food and other edible items along with quilts, blankets and other materials. Similarly, they are struggling to ensure supply of kerosine oil to these IDPs.

Woman dies due to accidental fire

A woman in the Badabair area of Peshawar died on Tuesday when she was hit by a bullet accidentally fired by her husband.

According to details, Ghazi Khan, a resident of Surizai in Badabair area, was cleaning his gun at his house when the weapon suddenly went off.

The bullet fired hit the wife (S) of Ghazi Khan who latter succumb to her injuries.

The father of the deceased, Fazle Rahim who was present at the time of the incident at the residence of his daughter, supported the statement of his sun-in-law.

Safe passage of relief

UN to talk with Afghan groups

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: The United Nations is to negotiate with the warring Afghan factions for a safe passage to supply humanitarian assistance for the people affected in the recent fighting, a UN official in said here on Friday.

Erick de Mul, UN coordinator for Afghanistan, told reporters that some 195,000 people had been displaced in the factional fighting during this summer.

He regretted that children were the worst affected in the fighting. He said some 12,000 people displaced from the Shomali (northern) region had taken shelter in former Soviet Union Compound in Kabul. "Eight thousand among these displaced persons are children," he said, and added, "it is unfortunate

that children have to go through this terrible experience."

He said some 60,000 were displaced from Panjsher, stronghold of key anti-Taliban commander Ahmed Shah Masood, 25,000 in Hazarajat in central Afghanistan and 16,000 from Taloqan, capital of northern Takhar province.

He regretted that civilians were the main victim of the fighting in Afghanistan.

He spoke highly of the "generosity" of the Afghan people who have provided accommodation to their compatriots displaced in the fighting. Responding to a question, he said the United Nations would need 100 million to 150 million dollars for the humanitarian assistance of the displaced Afghan people.—APP

NATION 14 OCT 1999

UNSC slates Taliban, drops reference to Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - The Security Council on Friday condemned Taliban rulers for undermining efforts to end the civil war, but decided against explicitly criticizing their main supporter, Pakistan.

In a statement by its President, Russian ambassador Sergei Lavrov, the Council said the Taliban had 'a primary responsibility' for the continued fighting in Afghanistan.

The Council expressed 'deep distress' over reports that 'thousands of non-Afghan nationals, mostly from religious schools and some of whom are below the age of 14' were fighting alongside the Taliban.

An earlier draft of Lavrov's statement said the schools were 'within Pakistan.'

Pakistan is the only one of Afghanistan's six neighbors to recognize the Taliban, who control the capital, Kabul, and most of the territory.

On Wednesday, the UN's special envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, told a news conference here that Pakistani supporters of the Taliban were a major threat to security.

'The United Nations has nothing to fear from the people of Afghanistan,' he said, 'but we do have problems with the people they call their guests.'

He went on: 'You see young people from Pakistan running around in their thousands and I doubt the Taliban controls them.'

Brahimi said he had briefed the Security Council on Tuesday and con-

veyed his 'frustration' at events, especially since the Taliban launched a military offensive in northern Afghanistan on July 28.

He said he had visited Kabul after Afghanistan's neighbors agreed at a meeting of deputy foreign ministers in Tashkent on July 20 to refrain from involvement in the war.

It was 'no secret that a major offensive was being prepared,' he said.

'We pleaded with the Taliban and

Polio vaccination targets 4 million Afghan kids

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Four million children are to be vaccinated against polio in Afghanistan next week, the UN said Saturday, urging the Afghan warring sides to observe a ceasefire during the three-day campaign.

Around 20,000 trained volunteers will vaccinate children under five years of age from October 25 to 27, the office of the United Nations coordinator for Afghanistan said.

The campaign will be carried out in coordination with the national immunisation days in neighbouring Pakistan.

In the earlier two rounds in Afghanistan in May and June, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation immunised 3.6 million children, about 85 per cent of the under-five population.

with Pakistan, which has some influence over the Taliban, but our efforts were useless,' he said.

The Council also condemned the Taliban for 'the sheltering and training of terrorists and planning of terrorist acts' and demanded that it hand over the billionaire Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, who has been indicted in the United States on 224 counts of murder.

On October 15, the Council voted to impose sanctions on the Taliban unless it surrender bin Laden, who is wanted in connection with the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7 last year.

The statement recalled that the Taliban have until November 14 to comply with the Council's demand.

The Council also said it was 'deeply disturbed' by the rise of illegal opium cultivation in areas under Taliban control.

Afghanistan is expected to produce a record 4,600 tonnes of opium this year, more than twice the 1998 harvest.

In Tashkent on Thursday, a UN official said the increase was to blame for the rise in the number of Islamic militants in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

'A clear connection is seen between religious extremist groups in the Caucasus region and the countries of Central Asia and contraband weapons, terrorist activity and the drug trade,' said Aziz Khudaiberdiyev of the United Nations' drug control department for Uzbekistan.

NATION

27 OCT 1999

WFP okays 201,850 metric tons food for Afghanistan

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - The Executive Board of the World Food Programme (WFP) has approved 201,850 metric tons food aid for Afghanistan for the years 2000 and 2001.

WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) for Afghanistan will provide 115,800 tones of food aid in 2000 and 86,050 in 2001.

The programme will kick off in January 2000.

"Several donors have already indicated their in making food and cash contributions towards WFP's activities in Afghanistan in 2000," said Mike Sackett, WFP Representative for Afghanistan.

WFP estimates that more food aid will be required in 2000 than in 2001. Internal displacement has swollen the cities, but there are few additional jobs. Blackades and natural emergencies such as floods or mudslides inhibit the amount of food imported

into low production rural areas. These problems will be exacerbated in 2000 with the 16 percent reduction in 1999 cereal harvest, due to previous dry winter.

WFP assistance will provide food for over 1.5 million Afghans in 2000 and more than one million 2001. Guided by its Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping unit (VAM), WFP will target household at greatest risk of food insecurity, which cannot obtain their minimum food requirements.

Rehabilitation assistance through food-for-work activities will be used to improve agricultural infrastructure in order to improve in food production. WFP intends to resume the rehabilitation of rural feeder roads to enhance access to markets and health facilities.

In the year 2000, WFP Afghanistan will introduce a new food-for-education project to encourage completion of primary school for boys and girls and increase enrolment. Initially this activity will be situated in Badakhshan Prov-

ince.

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Rehabilitation assistance through food-for-work activities will be used to improve agriculture infrastructure in order to improve in food production. WFP intends to resume the rehabilitation of rural feeder roads to enhance access to markets and health facilities.

According to the report, in the year 2000, WFP Afghanistan will introduce a new food-for-education project to encourage completion of primary schools for boys and girls as well as to encourage enrolment of children in it. Initially, this activity will be situated in Badakhshan province of the war ravaged Afghanistan.

UN optimistic about aid supplies to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (NNI) - UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, Erick de Mul has said that he is optimistic about aid supplies to the displaced persons of Afghanistan particularly the dis-
 "The people of Afghanistan are concerned that the UN sanctions would largely affect common people. The people of Afghanistan have been experiencing miseries of the years which has destroyed the economic and social infrastructure of the country. That is why, they are in dire need of humanitarian aid particularly those rendered homeless by the war." Erick de Mul said in an interview with the VOA.
 He said that the displaced Afghans are certainly in dire need of aid particularly food. He said that fifty to sixty thousand people have been rendered homeless and supply of food to them is somewhat difficult especially in Paritisher because, roads and routes are closed due to fear of war.

NATION

25 OCT 1999

No prospect of early solution to Afghan conflict: US expert

ISLAMABAD (NNI) - A visiting US expert on Afghan affairs, Dr. Barnett Rubin has said he does not see any prospects for solution to the Afghan conflict in the near future.

"Unfortunately I do not see prospects for the formation of a real national government in the war-ravaged country," Rubin said.

Rubin held talks with a number of Afghan personalities in Peshawar and discussed with them the situation in Afghanistan. He is the Director of Peace and Conflict section at a non-government foreign affairs study institute in New York, and has undertaken many researches on Afghanistan.

He said Taliban seem adamant to gain military victory, to impose their will on all and to form a central government in accordance with their principles. He said Taliban's opponents also lack any way out because they have, on the one hand isolated and assumed the shape of an ethnic resistance and, secondly, they do not have a national strategy.

Regional forces are also interfering in the issue and are trying to protect their interests," He said. "neither Afghans nor the international community have been able to end such interference and enable the Afghans to constitute their national government by themselves."

He said there are some movements among Afghans to protect their interests. He said there are some movements among Afghans to protect their interests. He said there are some movements among Afghans to protect their interests.

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mostly outside of Afghanistan to make arrangements for convening an emergent "Loya Jirga" (grand assembly). However, the difficulty in this regard is that such a system was proposed in the past by the former king and the tribal chiefs. "Therefore I doubt as to how these meetings, going on in Pakistan and Europe, would succeed in finding a set-up which may replace Taliban," Rubin says.

Rubin says foreign factor is significant in the Afghan conflict because they are providing resources enabling both the sides to continue war. "Pakistan's strong support is significant in the that they can win the war. Masood is also enjoying the strong support of Iran and Russia but he knows that he belongs to the minority group and can keep on resistance and can win. On the other hand, Taliban are confident that they can capture the whole country and are also not bound for reconciliation."

"I think one of the reasons for this attitude is the foreign support which they are getting. However, besides the foreign assistance, they are also getting a good money from narcotics smuggling with which they can continue the war for some time, even without foreign assistance," the American expert said.

Rubin said Afghans say that they would be able to resolve their problems themselves if the foreign countries leave them alone. "However, I think one of the reasons for this attitude is the foreign support which they are getting. However, besides the foreign assistance, they are also getting a good money from narcotics smuggling with which they can continue the war for some time, even without foreign assistance," the American expert said.

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think solution to the problem, at this stage, is not so easy to be resolved by the Afghan themselves." He said serious questions are there about the future government of Afghanistan, and is also not in harmony with the opinion of some Afghans that peace would return to Pakistan when the positions of Iran and Afghanistan over Afghanistan get closer and they evolve a mutual understanding.

He believes that Iran has no problem with Pakistan and Pakistan's only problem was with Afghanistan. He said Pakistan's conflict with Iran is not the factor behind this policy. Pakistan is pursuing the policy of supporting specific political forces in Afghanistan because it wants to get a strategic position vis-à-vis India and also to weaken Afghan and Pashtoons' nationalism.

"This creates a conflict for it with Iran. However, Pakistan does not follow this policy because it has some problem with Iran. The factors are rather linked with problems between India and Pakistan. So it cannot resolve the problems with Iran through talks. Iran is not capable to provide protection to Pakistan against India or to resolve the Pukhtunistan problem for it."

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FRONTIER POST
08 OCT 1989

NATION

27 OCT 1999

US, Taliban discuss Osama

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A senior US diplomat met Monday with a representative of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia to discuss the expulsion of Osama bin Laden from Afghan soil.

'The focus of the meeting was the Osama bin Laden issue,' said State Department spokesman James Rubin, following a meeting between US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderfurth and the Taliban's New York-based representative Abdul Hakeem Mujahid.

'They discussed various ideas about how to resolve our concerns in this area,' Rubin said, adding however that

Washington did not necessarily expect a quick resolution to the matter.

'Various ideas were discussed in that regard ... but I can't say we know what the outcome will be,' he said.

Osama, who has been indicted in the United States for his alleged role in the August 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, lives in Afghanistan as a 'guest' of the Islamic militia.

The United States is demanding that Osama be expelled and sent to a country where he can be brought to justice. Ten days ago the UN Security Council even voted to freeze funds to the Taliban group and ban flights of their aircraft unless bin Laden was handed over by November 14.

The militia had rejected the resolution, calling it 'cruel and unjust' — but on Saturday the Taliban said it was ready for talks with Washington on Osama, saying it wanted the issue resolved through high-level negotiations.

Rubin refused to comment on the 'ideas' discussed by Inderfurth and Mujahid for expelling Osama, but said he believed the Taliban was now talking because 'there isn't too much time left before these sanctions begin to bite.'

Before the Monday meeting Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said she believed Mujahid would want to talk about the Taliban's concern over the sanctions. Albright noted that talks between the Taliban and US officials were not unusual, but stressed that discussions about recognition of the militia would not progress unless the Osama issue was resolved. 'We've told them it will not be possible to make progress on these issues until Osama bin Laden is expelled from the Taliban-occupied territory to a place where he can be brought to justice,' she said.

US-Taliban talks on Osama likely

KABUL, Oct 23: The Taliban and the United States have expressed willingness to hold talks with each other on the thorny issue of Osama bin Laden.

In Kabul Information Minister Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a statement on Saturday that the Taliban wanted the issue to be resolved through high-level negotiations.

In Washington, the head of the anti-terrorism cell in the US State Department, Michael Sheehan, told the Voice of America in an interview on Friday that US officials were ready to negotiate with the Taliban over the handing over of Osama.

Muttaqi said: "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready to talk with the United States on the issue of Osama bin Laden. Kabul favours good relations with Washington.

"We want the issue of Osama bin Laden to be resolved in a way in which the Islamic laws and Afghan culture are respected and the United States' concerns are also completely satisfied."

In the VOA interview, Sheehan said the US, and now also the UN, wanted that Taliban should abandon "harbouring" Osama bin Laden and hand him over to the court so that "he is tried for the charges framed against him".

—Agencies

US anti-terrorism official meets Taliban

WASHINGTON, Oct 19: A US anti-terrorism official met a representative of the Taliban to urge the handover of Osama bin Laden, the State Department said on Tuesday.

The meeting followed a UN Security Council vote last Friday threatening sanctions on the Taliban unless Bin Laden is handed over within 30 days.

Spokesman James Foley said Michael Sheehan, the department's coordinator for counter-terrorism, met Taliban representative Abdul Hakeem Mujahid in New York on Monday.

"Ambassador Sheehan explained to Mr Mujahid the implications of last Friday's UN SC vote that will impose sanctions on the Taliban unless Osama is turned over to authorities in a country where he can be brought to justice," Foley told reporters. He said the US hoped the Taliban would comply within the 30-day period specified in the resolution, but gave no details of the discussion.—Reuters

DAWN

24 OCT 1999

DAWN

24 OCT 1999

US sees Taliban offer to try Osama a possible prelude to expulsion

By John Lancaster

WASHINGTON: Scrambling to avert international sanctions, Taliban government of Afghanistan has offered to convene a panel of Islamic judges to try hero of the Islamic world Osama bin Laden in a possible prelude to his expulsion, Clinton administration officials said on Friday.

The officials cautioned that they have not reached any conclusions about the seriousness of the offer, which was made by the Taliban's representative in New York, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, in a meeting in Washington on Monday with Karl F. Inderfurth, assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs.

Mujahid also told Inderfurth that the Taliban would be willing to place Osama under house arrest, a proposal US officials described as laughable.

On the other hand, they said, the Taliban do appear to be responding to international pressure to expel Osama, a wealthy Saudi native who has been indicted in New York in connection with the bombing of two US embassies in East Africa last year.

Earlier this month, the UN

Security Council voted to impose sanctions on the Taliban if Afghanistan did not expel Osama by Nov. 14 to a country where he could be brought to trial.

Osama also is apparently feeling the heat. In a letter to the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, Osama asked for a guarantee of safe passage to an unspecified country, according to a report on Friday by the independent Afghan Islamic Press. The report, which US officials deem credible, quoted a spokesman for Omar as saying that Osama sought Taliban's assistance in reaching a secret location that would be known only to "the Taliban chief and one other person."

The Taliban has since made it known through official channels that the likely destination is Iraq. US officials say they presume that the Taliban are publicizing Osama's letter as a means of putting pressure on Washington to act on the group's offer to convene a panel of Islamic scholars, or ulema, to judge bin Laden's fate. The panel would include representatives from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and a third

Muslim country, according to two officials with knowledge of the offer.

"Our view on that is that whatever way is found to see that he is expelled or extradited and brought to justice is fine," said a senior administration official. "If an ulema (council) is a process that the Taliban wish to pursue, that's up to them."

The Taliban, like Osama, espouse their own brand of Islam. Administration officials say there are two ways to interpret the group's offer. One is that Taliban officials desperately want to find a face-saving way to expel Osama to a country where he can be tried; a decision to that effect by Islamic judges could give them the political cover to do so. Another interpretation is that the Taliban have no intention of giving up Osama and is merely playing for time.

In any event, an administration official said, "We'll not be bound to any decision of the ulema. We're bound by the decision of the Security Council, but for them the clock is ticking." *Dawn—LAT—WP News Service (c) The Washington Post*

DAW

31 OCT 1999

RAWA supports Pakistan's efforts to end terrorism

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - The Revolutionary Association Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) while welcoming the recent remarks of Pakistani authorities against terrorist elements from all over the world who are hiding in Afghanistan, has stressed for joint efforts against those terrorists who are working against the interests of Pakistan and are threat to the global peace.

Through its communique on Monday, RAWA states, "these days the high authorities of Pakistan talk about the terrorism by the people who have been and still are being supported and trained by Pakistan itself. Since the first day of the rise of fundamentalists in April 1992, we have said to Nawaz Sharif and his government that the existence of these anti-women forces in Afghanistan are much larger and darker adversity than the Russian invasion and therefore our people must be given condolence instead of congratulations. It has been years since we have said that the strengthening of the fundamentalists of all shades in our country will bite the security of the countries in the region beyond the will of any body.

We have been telling the Pakistani authorities about crimes and treacheries, about amputation of hand and feet, about mass killings, about rape of seventy years old mothers, about the dishonour of elderly fathers and mothers, about destruction and snatching people's properties all committed by the

Jehadies and now the Talibaa, but unfortunately not a single authority listened to us."

"Today if Nawaz Sharif and Shebaz Sharif and the others are giving statements about the interference of the Talibaa, about closing their terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and are warning Mula Umar directly to close the camps, we really think this is a good beginning and we really appreciate it but it is not enough for any reasons because the Jehadies and the Talibaa must be trailed not only for the recent crimes they have committed but also for the treacheries and crimes in the last 10 years. They must stop supporting the talibaa practically. It is quite clear that the Jehadies who were trained in Pakistan could not last any longer when Pakistan along with the other countries stopped supporting them. Similarly the Talibaa will not be able to continue with their political crimes anymore especially if Pakistan stops supporting.

The government of Pakistan must be well aware that the Talibaa like the Jehadies will kick off their masters at last and these terrorist training camps and the recent killings is the beginning. The people who are in power in Afghanistan today, will harm the people of Pakistan and even other countries in the region just in order to remain in power. Our people who have experienced cruelties and treacheries of all shades in the past 20 years know very well how to struggle against such criminals and will never give up until they are

totally destroyed but we as the representatives of our trampled women would like to ask the government of Pakistan and especially Nawaz Sharif to take lessons from their past experiences and start revealing the actual reality of the Talibaa and strongly condemn them. We think only expressing ideas on the media will not solve any problem. Practical measures must be taken and economical and military aids to the Talibaa must be banned."

Nawaz Sharif and his government should never allow that any Talibaa or Jehadi or any other fundamentalist Afghan or Pakistani, within any limit of democracy that exists in Pakistan, bring about any alteration to the prestige of Pakistan in the international community. Once again we appreciate the statements of Nawaz Sharif and others against the Talibaa. We believe that until the fundamentalists are there, we must expect the worse kind of crimes and cruelties in both the countries and we cannot even think of peace and security. We hope that these statements will not remain limited to words only but rise to practical steps and changes in the policies of Pakistan about Afghanistan. We believe that the people of both countries will take part in a united and decisive struggle for the complete elimination of the fundamentalists and definitely the democratic government of Pakistan will also play its important role. Hoping for the day when the filth of fundamentalism is eliminated throughout the world."

Afghan women hail Shahbaz's statement

From Our Correspondent
PESHAWAR - The Revolutionary Association Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) has become the first-ever group which has hailed Punjab Chief Minister Mian Mohammad Shahbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain's recent statement, regarding terrorism.

"We not only welcome such approach of the Pakistani government, but RAWA remarked through its communique issued on Thursday, "the pin-pointed such type of terrorism and terrorist element's brutalities against the common people several years ago, added. The RAWA declared Punjab Chief Minister's statement a good initiative. "We condemn the recent killings by a number of rival religious forces at Karachi and other parts of Pakistan and extend sympathies to members of the bereaved families."

It added that Shahbaz Sharif and other high ranking authorities need to keep in mind the RAWA's previous apprehensions that Afghanistan is not only a safe haven for Osama Riaz Basra but even it is nursery for the activists of other religious factions who intend to become terrorist.

NATION

06 OCT 1999

Tajikistan urges efforts to end Afghan war

Expresses concern over massive drug smuggling in region

UNITED NATIONS: The President of the Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan said on Friday the world should "do everything possible" to help end the war in neighbouring Afghanistan, which he said was destabilising the region.

Emomali Rakhmonov, whose small impoverished country shares a 950-mile border with Afghanistan, also told the United Nations it should be very worried by massive smuggling of Afghan opium through Tajikistan.

"We are extremely concerned by the continuing intra-Afghan conflict. The world community must do everything possible for the soonest restoration of peace on Afghan soil," Rakhmonov said. "Engulfed by flames of conflict, Afghanistan is a source of many threats destabilising the situation in Tajikistan, all of Central Asia and far beyond," he added.

The Islamist Taliban movement,

which controls about 90 per cent of the country, is battling an opposition alliance led by Ahmad Shah Masud.

Kabul says Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and Iran are backing the opposition, which in turn accuses Pakistan of supporting the Taliban.

"We consider that the Security Council should once again very seriously review the situation in and around Afghanistan and take action, including imposing sanctions against those who violate resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly," Rakhmonov said.

Last December the Security Council issued a resolution demanding the factions in Afghanistan, in particular the Taliban, to enter peace talks and threatened unspecified measures if there was no compliance.

Rakhmonov said he backed the peacemaking efforts of the so-called 'six plus two group' - China, Iran, Pak-

istan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - plus the United States and Russia. Last Monday UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sharply criticised the group, saying unnamed members were actually supporting some of the Afghan faction. Rakhmonov said the Commonwealth of Independent States, the successor organisation to the Soviet Union, was doing all it could to stop the spread of Taliban's "militant ideology" and the related flow of arms, crime and terrorism.

"I wish to particularly emphasise the seriousness of the drug problem. The protracted war in Afghanistan, in particular, has turned the country into one of the main drug centres of the world," Rakhmonov said. Russian border guards are helping patrol the Tajik-Afghan border - much of which is mountainous - which marks the beginning of the transit route for drugs destined for Europe. — Reuters

Taliban's help for Japanese hostages release sought

By Ismail Khan

PESHAWAR: Chairman Human Right Watch, Kyrgyzstan, Tursam Bek Akunov on Saturday appealed to the Taliban to let him and his team visit Afghanistan, meet the leader of Uzbekistan's Islamic Party and help secure the release of Japanese hostages and a Kyrgyz general being held by Islamic radicals in the central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan.

"I appeal to them to let us visit Afghanistan and help us secure the release of the Japanese hostages and our military general," Tursam Bek told The News at a local guest house here. The Kyrgyz human rights activist, who arrived in Pakistan along with his two team members on September 26, said he had met with Taliban's ambassador to Pakistan Saeedur Rehman Haqqani to seek visas for Afghanistan but to no avail. "He told us that we are not welcomed in Afghanistan."

Bek, who is also the chairman of Congress of Human Rights Watch in central Asia, said he had met with a commander of the Islamic opposi-

tion in Zardali village in Dadkin region in Kyrgyzstan to seek his help in securing the release of the four Japanese hostages and military general. He said that Musa Abdur Rahman, an Uzbek commander of the radical Islamic part, called his leader Muhammad Tahir in Kabul and had let him know of his endeavours.

"He called Tahir on his satellite phone and told him about our efforts," Tursam recalled. "Tahir asked us to reach Kabul where he would discuss with us the modalities of hostages' release," he said.

Islamic radicals kidnapped four Japanese and a military general of Kyrgyzstan about two months back. Tursam quoted Mus Abdur Rahman as saying that all five hostages, believed to be in Kyrgyz mountains, were all right. "He set no condition for their release," he said.

Tursam, who said he was very well known to the Islamic radicals and had had extremely good relations with Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev, maintained that he was trying to mediate the release of the hostages since the Kyrgyz government dubbed the radicals as bandits

and did not want to talk to them.

He said that Musa had told him that Tahir would track them down once they reached Afghanistan. "We know that this is our last chance to secure a peaceful release of the hostages, otherwise the government is preparing to use force and there would be a lot of bloodshed. Japanese are our guests and we do not want any harm coming to them."

The human rights activist said that the Taliban had denied the presence of Muhammad Tahir in Kabul and had thus denied them visas. "The Afghan ambassador told us that the Taliban were already under a lot of pressure on account of Osama bin Laden. "We cannot afford another issue," he quoted Saeedur Rahman Haqqani as saying.

The Taliban have denied any links with Islamic radicals in the neighboring Muslim central Asian republics. "What have they got to hide. If Tahir is not there and we don't see him there. We will tell the world that he is not there," Tahir Bek said. He said that so far he had received no help either from the Taliban and the Pakistani government officials.

02 OCT 1999

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

03 OCT 1999

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Iran stresses broad-based govt in Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS (NNI) — The Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi has reiterated Tehran's call for the establishment of a broad-based government in the war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Addressing annual coordination meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) on the side line of the UN General Assembly session, Kharazi said that the establishment of a broad based government accommodating all Afghan segments is the only solution to the Afghan conflict.

Kharazi also met the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi. During the meeting, Brahimi briefed Kharazi on the outcome of his visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan. He said the United Nations has been stressing for a negotiated settlement of the Afghan crisis.

The Iranian Foreign Minister expressed regret over prevailing deplorable conditions in Afghanistan.

Rakhmanov concerned over infighting

Meanwhile, Tajik President Emamoli Rakhmanov has expressed serious concern over continuation of war in the neighbouring Afghanistan.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly session, he accused Taliban of causing irreparable loss to the country through their war-mongering policies. He urged the regional countries and the United Nations to find a solution for putting an end to the prevailing tension in war-torn Afghanistan.

Rakhmanov said that Taliban have been pursuing a dangerous path by converting the area under their controlled into narcotics den.

NATION

14 OCT 1990

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14 OCT 1990
THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL

Nawaz wanted crackdown on Taliban: UAE

DUBAI, Oct 13: Arab officials, in recent contact with former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, said on Wednesday they were concerned that the coup in Pakistan would thwart his planned crackdown on Taliban rulers.

The officials said Mr Nawaz Sharif had briefed them on Islamabad's get-tough policy on the Taliban during Monday's visit to the UAE.

"We still don't exactly know what is going on in Pakistan. We need to see whether the new leadership will keep up the pressure on the Taliban," one official said, adding that Mr Sharif had made it clear that Pakistan had a new policy towards the Taliban.

"Sharif said he insisted that the Taliban stop all activities in Pakistan, hand over Osama bin Laden or ask him to leave Afghanistan and shut down all training camps," he said.

He said Nawaz Sharif had told Gulf officials that he was especially concerned about the Taliban's role in a fresh wave of sectarian violence in Pakistan.

Diplomatic sources said Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia had been urged by the United States to join a squeeze on the Taliban. — Reuters

DAWN

14 OCT 1990

Pakistan urges UN to resume assistance to Afghan refugees

06 OCT 1999

FRONTIER POST

GENEVA (NNI) - Pakistan Tuesday asked the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme to resume their discontinued assistance for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan till voluntary repatriation takes place.

Pakistan's Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas Muhammad Zubair Kidwai made the demand while speaking at 50th session of the executive committee of the UN High Commissioner's programme for Refugees in Geneva.

Kidwai asked the UNHCR to play a catalytic role to attract resources for developing income generating projects and reconstruction of peaceful areas inside Afghanistan in order to attract the Afghan refugees back to their homeland.

He said in spite of the return of around 2 million Afghan refugees, some 1.5 million, continue to remain on Pakistani soil. "As Pakistan continues to cater for the needs of these refugees, the dying up of international assistance for the Afghan refugees has left Pakistan largely on its own to deal with this onerous burden".

He said while Pakistan endeavors to

provide assistance to the refugees without own limits resources. "We are finding it increasingly difficult to cater for the basic needs of the refugees who are, therefore, compelled to leave the camps and shift to the urban centres in search of work".

Kidwai told the meeting that the large-scale movement to urban centers and the subsequent participation of the refugees in economic activities in these areas has created multifarious administrative, economic, security, and social problems. "This has led to growing impatience among the locals with the Afghan refugees especially in areas where the large refugee population has changed the demographic balance. But we disagree with the objectives reflected in the 1999 Mid-Year Progress Report regarding "operations in Pakistan" that gives the impression of a pattern of fear and intimidation.

He proposed that grass-root NGOs should receive the financial support of the international community for their work in food delivery, providing basic facilities like health, education, drinking water and forest care for the Afghan refugees. He said though Pakistan continues to look after the Afghan refugees,

it cannot be expected to carry this burden alone. Pakistan, he said, generously responded to the protection needs of Afghan refugees fleeing from persecution and foreign occupation. "The economic cost of Pakistan of hosting the Afghan refugees has been incalculable. Damage to infrastructure, roads, canals, drainage and sewerage systems has been considerable. Entire forests have disappeared. Education and Health institutions are under severe strain".

Pakistani official maintained that those Afghan refugees who return to their homes inside Afghanistan have been marred by the ravages of years of war and internal strife for them. "Pakistan is the land of economic opportunity where they can find comparatively attractive jobs. The earning members of the family thus always return to Pakistan in search of work".

PPP never backed Taliban, says Benazir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) never backed the rise of Taliban, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said on Thursday.

She was talking to Wali Masood, brother of Afghan leader Ahmad Shah Masood, in London and discussed the prevailing situation in South Asia, with specific reference to Afghanistan.

Benazir informed Masood that contrary to the public perceptions, the PPP did not back the rise of the Taliban. She said she had instructed the government to persuade the Taliban to reach an understanding with other Afghan groups, including Ahmad Shah Masood and General Dostum in the North whilst improving their relations with neighbouring countries such as Iran.

She said that whilst the PPP was in power, the Taliban did not cross into Kabul. However, after her brother was killed as part of the conspiracy to destabilise the PPP government, the Taliban marched into Kabul unilaterally thus leading to a re-

newed crisis in that war-torn country.

She emphasised that the PPP believed in a policy of non-interference in Afghanistan. It welcomed efforts by the United Nations special envoy to build upon a solution, which had the backing of the different important players in Afghanistan.

Benazir also took the opportunity to explain the PPP's vision of South Asia for the new Millennium. In this regard she said that we are living in an era of globalisation where international standards of good governance and transparency are taking root. This is an era where the markets will dominate the political direction and influence of nations. It was her hope that the nations of South Asia would be able to build a Free Trade zone, allowing for the free movement of people, common tariffs, a common market and a common approach to the universal values of human dignity.

She conveyed the greetings of the PPP to Ahmad Shah Masood and to his supporters. — NNI

01 OCT 1999
THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

UN urged to resume aid to Afghan DPs

GENEVA (NNI) - Pakistan

Tuesday asked the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme to resume their discontinued assistance for Afghan refugees in Pakistan till voluntary repatriation takes place.

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He said while Pakistan endeavours to provide assistance to the refugees without own limits resources, its task has been made formidable by the discontinuation of the WFP food assistance and the gradual phasing out of the care and maintenance programme by UN-

HCR

"We are finding it increasingly difficult to cater for the basic needs of the refugees who are, therefore, compelled to leave the camps and shift to the urban centres in search of work".

Kidwai told the meeting that the large-scale movement to urban centres and the subsequent participation of the refugees in economic activities in these areas has created multifarious administrative, economic, security, and social problems.

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But we disagree with the objectives reflected in the 1999 Mid-Year Progress Report regarding "operations in Pakistan" that gives the impression of a pattern of fear and intimidation.

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06 OCT 2000

FRONTIER POST

Taliban not involved in terrorism: PPP

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - Najam Ud Din Khan, Provincial Secretary General of Pakistan Peoples Party has said that existing wave of terrorism in the country is outcome of government's negative policies and not because of Taliban.

"If rulers accuse Taliban of deteriorating law and order situation in NWFP then who is behind such incidents at Karachi and Lahore," he questioned during a Press conference at Peshawar on Wednesday.

Flanked by a number of PPP stalwarts including Khawaja Yawar Naseer, Ayub Shah, Zahir Shah Toro and others Najam Ud Din Khan said that Nawaz Sharif government had lost credibility.

In response to a question, Najam Ud Din said that no one other than Nawaz Sharif and his associates could be held responsible for the ongoing wave of terrorism. The PPP leader said that on one hand, the government's policies had resulted unemployment and price hike and on the other it had caused worst kind of discrimination and sense of deprivation among the smaller provinces.

In response to a question, Najam Ud Din Khan justified Benazir Bhutto's stay abroad saying, "we have no trust in this government."

He added that when a government couldn't safeguard life of a high ranking police officer how it would protect Benazir Bhutto?

He claimed that Chaudri Ahmad Mukhtar has resigned from the office of Secretary General in the wake of his personal compulsions and thus had no links with expulsion of former Chief Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao. He further claimed that Ahmad Mukhtar had already backed such a decision. He outrightly dispelled the impression that opposition from NWFP had an under-hand deal with the government, therefore, they were allowed for a free movement. In fact, opposition is too much strong in this province and it is impossible for the government to repeat what it had experienced in Karachi.

He viewed that government is also aware of its weak position in this province, therefore, it refrained from negative tactics. In response to another question, Najam Ud Din said that opposition would show its strength in the rally.

FRONTIER POST

07 OCT 2000

Pakistan asks Taliban to shut terrorist camps

PM says Afghanistan-trained
elements behind sectarian violence

08 OCT 1993

FRONTIER POST

From SIKANDER HAYAT

ISLAMABAD — Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Thursday said that he had demanded of the Taliban leadership to ensure an immediate closure of the terrorist camps in Afghanistan.

"Information based on hard evidence has come to light that the perpetrators of the recent upsurge in sectarian violence in Pakistan were trained in a camp inside Afghanistan. We want these camps to be closed down immediately," he added.

Talking to newsmen at the Prime Minister's House Nawaz said a delegation led by the director-general of the Inter-Services Intelligence Lt-Gen. Ziauddin was sent to Kandahar who conveyed Pakistan's demand for the closure of the training camps by providing Taliban's supreme leader, Mulla Omar with strong evidence of presence of such camps in Afghanistan.

Scores of people have been killed in various parts of Pakistan, some in a mosque, in the last few

days, reviving the ghost of sectarian violence which till recently had disappeared. The killers acted like highly-trained professionals.

The prime minister said "we

Militia evades comments

ISLAMABAD (NNI) — Taliban Thursday avoided comments on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's remarks about the presence of terrorist camps in Afghanistan.

"There is no need to comment. Our central leadership may come up with reaction," an Afghan source said.

Nawaz Sharif said Thursday Pakistan has made clear to Taliban government to take concrete steps to eradicate terrorist training camps that are operating inside Afghanistan.

have made it clear" to the Afghanistan government that the presence of terrorist camps on Afghan soil are unacceptable.

"We will not let anybody sabotage peace and stability of Pakistan."

"Then we will see" was the prime minister's response when asked what would be Pakistan's reaction in case the Taliban leadership did not respond favourably to its demand for closing the training camps.

Only a day before, on Wednesday, a Foreign Office spokesman denied involvement of the Taliban in the sectarian violence. The Foreign Office virtually contradicted a statement by Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif a day earlier to the effect that sectarian violence in Pakistan was basically handiwork of the terrorists trained in Afghanistan.

The supreme leader of the Taliban has denounced the sectarian terrorism in Pakistan and denied involvement in it. But, Nawaz said that Pakistan's allegation was based on hard evidence which was collected when some terrorists after caught and interrogated.

The premier, however, did not say if any other outside power or source, too, was involved in fanning sectarian violence in Pakistan. "We are also probing if any other external entity is also involved in sectarian violence in Pakistan. As long as there is no solid proof of anyone else's involvement, I will not say anything," he added.

But he immediately qualified his statement to bail-out others than Afghans by saying "there are some people who do not want to see a prosperous Pakistan."

The prime minister said that we were considering all possibilities to stop terrorism. "It is regrettable that some anti-social elements are bent upon creating law and order situation in the country. All the provincial governments have been asked to deal with these elements strictly," he concluded.

DAWN

FRONTIER POST

08 OCT 1993

Major shift in Pakistan policy on Afghanistan

By Umer Farooq

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's Afghan policy has undergone a basic shift though, there doesn't seem to be consensus in the policy making circles on the change which is primarily the result of growing international pressure on Pakistan on the issue of international terrorism.

Though the statements of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other senior government functionaries about the existence of terrorist training camps in Afghanistan are a strong indicator of the policy shift, the change in policy started becoming apparent following a cabinet decision in the month of August to start negotiations with the Afghan opposition.

Following the decision a high level delegation led by Interior Secretary Rustam Shah held talks with Northern Alliance representatives in Dushanbe and Taliban leadership in Kandhar.

Apparently, the aim was to bring the two warring factions to the negotiating table. This attempt has achieved only a marginal success but nevertheless it indicates change from the previous stance when the officials used to emphasise Taliban dominance of Afghanistan as the prime reality.

The shift seems to be sudden as only a few days ago in a meeting at the Interior Ministry on the law and order situation, there was no mention of terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. The meeting which took place a two days before Chief Minister of Punjab Shahbaz Sharif made the startling statement, was attended by the senior officials of law-enforcement and intelligence agencies. The meeting comprehensively reviewed the law and order situation, however, according to sources there was no mention of Afghanistan in connection with the law and order situation in Pakistan.

The confusion in the official circles

NATION

is also reflected in the statement issued by the Foreign Office to clarify the assertions of the Punjab Chief Minister about training camps in Afghanistan. Without naming the Taliban or Afghanistan, the Chief Minister told a news conference that Riaz Basra and other terrorists are getting training in a neighbouring country, though the reference was obvious.

The Foreign Ministry issued a clarification the very next day which was clearly aimed at absolving Taliban of involvement in sectarian killings in Pakistan. The Foreign Office statement said that the Chief Minister didn't accuse Taliban of involvement in the incidents of terrorism in the country.

The Ministry statement went a step further and accused some elements of creating differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan by distorting the statement of the Chief Minister.

Regarding the visit of ISI DG to Kandahar the Foreign Office termed it as part of routine consultative process between the two countries.

However, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif the very next day spoke in detail about changed perceptions of his government policy vis-à-vis happenings in Afghanistan. He told the news briefing that some of the terrorists, rounded up recently, disclosed to the investigators that they got training in Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister during the Press briefing also said that he sent ISI DG to Afghanistan to talk about the issue.

The fact that there is confusion on the issue among the official circles is reflected by the fact that the Foreign Office clarification was approved by the Cabinet. This confusion is likely to have practical implications on Pakistan's policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan and how it will reflect on the situation country is facing as a result of Indian propaganda blitz regarding Pakistan's involvement in international terrorism. The Indian propaganda blitz is aimed at establishing connection between happenings in Afghanistan and international terrorism.

Fazl vows to back Taliban against US

F.P. Bureau Report

MINGORA - Maulana Fazlur Rehman, amir Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) has warned the rulers of dire consequences if they allowed the United State's forces to attack at Taliban from Pakistan's land.

Fazlur Rehman, while addressing a public meeting here in Grassi Ground Thursday expressed his concern the statement of Shahbaz Sharif against Taliban vowed to do every thing in the defence of the Taliban.

He said unemployment, price-hike were on their peak and the rulers had failed to control the situation.

Haji Sardar Ali presented some

resolutions and condemned the government for increasing rates of power. He asked the IGP NWFP to appoint a permanent SSP in Swat, and recover all the amounts from the people involved in Swat visa scandal, he also demanded ban on the activities of Agha Khan foundation and arrest of the killers of Maulana Chitrali. Maulana Ubaidur Rehman, Maulana Gul Naseeb, Qari Abdul Bais, also addressed on the occasion and criticised the government's policies.

They said their party was an organised one and it would launch a country-wide anti-government movement.

They also flayed IMF, World Bank for dictating to Pakistan.

FRONTIER POST

04 OCT 1999

No shift in Afghan policy, says Sartaj

By Ansar Abbasi

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: Pakistan on Friday announced that there was no shift in Islamabad's policy towards the Taliban.

Talking to *Dawn*, Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz said: "One should distinguish between Afghanistan and Taliban to understand Islamabad's cry."

Referring to the statements by the prime minister, Punjab chief minister and latest (on Friday) by the interior minister in which the three had accused Afghanistan of being involved in sectarian violence and drug smuggling via Pakistan, Mr Aziz said: "We are not blaming Taliban".

"If any objectionable activity is taking place within Afghanistan, it does not mean that it is happening with the approval of the Taliban government," the foreign minister said while trying to remove the confusion about Pakistan's policy on Afghanistan.

He said the Taliban had assured fullest support to Pakistan in these areas of concerns and promised to cooperate at all levels.

He categorically said that the statements of the PM, Punjab CM and the interior minister had referred to the objectionable activities taking place in Afghanistan. "No one had blamed the Taliban," he added.

Many objectionable things, he said, were happening even in Pakistan without the consent of the government. Afghanistan, he added, was a very unstable and unsettled territory and the Taliban had no firm control over it.

"Since it is a difficult place to rule, it has become a haven for drug barons, terrorists and evil elements," Mr Aziz said, adding that because of the government's loose control the illicit activities of such elements were spilling over to Pakistan and other areas as well.

The minister said the general impression about the shift of Pakistan's policy on Afghanistan was "false". He reiterated that when Pakistan talked about Afghanistan it did not mean that it was holding the Taliban responsible.

PQP chief vows to unite Afghans

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR — Former federal minister and chief of his faction Pukhtoonkhwa Quami Party Mohammad Afzal Khan has announced to initiate struggle for unification of the Pukhtoons, settled on both sides of the Durand Line.

"When the former Soviet Union disintegrated and converted into several states on the name of nationalities and Hong Kong merged with China on such grounds, then why the Pukhtoons are scattered," he remarked during a Press conference here at Peshawar on Saturday.

Flanked by a number of PQP stalwarts from all over the province, Mohammad Afzal Khan said, in a bid to build up a consensus among the Pukhtoons, he had decided to convene a Grand Jirga.

Explaining further his proposed decision, Mohammad Afzal Khan said that it could be a non-political gathering and could be participated by the Pukhtoon politicians, intellectuals, professional and others not only from Pakistan and Afghanistan but from all over the world. He, while answering to a question, said that all leading figures of the religious-cum-political circles will also be invited to the proposed Jirga. He added that in the light of this jirga, he intended to give an opportunity to elders of this scattered nation to sit across a table and find out a solution to their problems.

Answering to yet another question, Mohammad Afzal Khan said that venue, date and time of the proposed grand jirga could be decided on completion of the contacts. He added that he is being assisted by his associates like Murtaza Shaheen, Riaz Khattak, Nisar Mazloom. He said that all those who favour his initiatives need to contact them and help them.

In response to a question, Mohammad Afzal Khan said that religious forces need to cement his efforts as unification of Pukhtoons may be considered unifi-



Mohammad Afzal Khan addressing a Press conference.—Staff photo

cation of the Muslims as the Pukhtoons are Muslim as a whole nation. Elaborating further his point of view, the PQP leader said that Central Asian Republics have been established on the name of nationalities and Germans have joined each other on such grounds, therefore, the Pukhtoons must be allowed for a re-uniting.

He further said that almost all of the regional countries, particularly Pakistan want to establish consumer markets in the Central Asian Republics but situation of Afghanistan is the main hurdle.

After unification of the Pukhtoons, there could be peace and normalcy in all over the region. Mohammad Afzal Khan while answering to a question, claimed that no one could replace the theme of nationalism and he diverted attention towards disintegration of the former Soviet Union.

He added that Soviet Communist revolution had dominated the Central Asian Region for around 70 years and even the Communists from Russia had made their best to replace culture, traditions, language and other aspects of these Muslims by their own.

NATION

10 OCT 1989

Govt paving way for US attack on Afghanistan: Fazl

From Our Correspondent

NEWSHERA—Chief of JUI Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that the Government of Pakistan is trying to pave the way for the Clinton administration to attack Afghanistan and destroy the Taliban government in order to please the Americans.

After disintegration of Soviet Union the USA now has turned her attention towards the Islamic movements particularly in on the pretext that the Taliban government was protecting the terrorists and violating the human rights "he criticised adding that when Afghanistan was ruled by professors and engineers and violation of human rights was on the peak, America did not react but now as the government was run by the Taliban the USA has started making objections. Addressing a well-attended public gathering in connection with mass mobilising movement against the American here Saturday at Manki Chowk of Nowshera Maulana warned America not to indulge in the affairs of Pakistan and religious movements otherwise Bill Clinton and his forces would

be responsible of dire consequences.

Referring to the tussle between the government and opposition he said that both aides are engaged in a struggle to please the American, however he added that in presence of JUI no one can make the Muslims of this region slaves.

He maintained that our whole system including economy, politics and defence were, under the influence of America.

He was of the view that our budget is prepared under the supervision of IMF and WB and was the recent budget presented by the government of Nawaz Sharif was prepared by IMF. He further added that though the government has claimed to have presented a tax free budget but on the contrary taxes were imposed on the masses, making their lives miserable.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman made the audience laugh when he cited the example of Nawaz Sharif and said that during the address of Nawaz Sharif to the nation after Kargil crisis Nawaz Sharif has given a wise philosophy by arguing that war needs courage but to leave the battle field needs more courage than war.

'Govt implicating Taliban to please US'

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI—The Naib Amir, Harkatul Jihad Al-Islami, Maulana Mohammad Ahmed said that the government was falsely implicating Taliban in the present wave of sectarian violence and the move was aimed at pleasing the United States.

Addressing a Press conference at Rawalpindi Press Club Saturday afternoon he said all these allegations were levelled against Taliban on the direction of US as United States wanted to label Afghanistan as terrorist state and to isolate it among the comity of nations. He further said that America was afraid of growing popularity of Islamic movements all over the world and was working on a plan to contain these movements and to label Muslims as terrorists.

He alleged that under a US direction the government of Mian Nawaz Sharif was working on a plan to ban religious organisations in the country and the vilification campaign against Taliban was part of that plan.

He said the sectarian violence in the

country existed much before Taliban came into existence in Afghanistan and people of Pakistan would not believe in these false allegations.

He said people of Pakistan would not let the government ban religious organisations and would foil any such attempt by Mian Nawaz Sharif who was playing in the hands of United States.

He further said that after the Kargil debacle Mian Nawaz Sharif just to bail his government out was levelling charges of terrorism against Mujahideen. He said that his party and other religious and Jihad outfits would thwart his anti-Islam and anti-state moves.

He demanded of the government to release the activists of his party who were arrested in connection with the present wave of terrorism in the country. He said that they were peace loving citizens and promoting the sacred cause of Jihad and Islam in the country.

He said that they would be holding the meeting of Majlis-i-Shoora in next few days and would announce future line of action viz-a-viz government policy towards Taliban.

Drugs, terrorists coming from Kabul: Sartaj

ISLAMABAD (NNI)—Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz has said drugs and terrorists are coming into Pakistan from Afghanistan but added that Taliban could not be held responsible for it owing to the bad situation in that country.

"In fact, civil war has been going on in Afghanistan for the last twenty years. Earlier, the Russians invaded Afghanistan and now too the situation is bad there. Every kind of people have gathered there and Taliban could not be blamed for it", Sartaj Aziz said in an interview with the BBC.

He dispelled the impression that Taliban are deliberately doing so saying Islamabad has sought the cooperation of the student militia because the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan casts its effect on Pakistan as well. Drugs and terrorists are coming into Pakistan from Afghanistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, he said, made the statement to seek Taliban's cooperation for preventing these people as Afghanistan was creating problem for Pakistan.

The minister said that Taliban have pledged that they would make efforts and would definitely cooperate with Pakistan if any terrorist is found in their country. He said that Taliban have said that they do not want the Afghan soil to be used for such activities creating problems and concern for other countries.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif recently said the terrorist training camps are existed in Afghanistan. He said that an intelligence team has gone to Kandhar to hold talks with the Taliban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar Akhund on the issue. The delegation demanded Mulla Omar to close down the terrorist camps and also hand over a list of the terrorists.

Sartaj Aziz did not agree with the compere that the remarks of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were aimed at releasing US pressure and said that Pakistan has all along been opposing terrorism. He added that Afghanistan itself is faced with terrorism. He also referred to a recent bomb blast in Kandhar killing and number of people. "Neither Islam nor anybody else allow terrorism and the entire world is opposed to it. We have always cooperated with them (United States) and there was no need to convey any special message to Washington", Aziz said.

Although Taliban have assured cooperation to Pakistan in checking the terrorism but said that it is not necessary that all the people demanded by Pakistan would be living in Afghanistan.

Pakistan wants broad-based Afghan govt

By Hasan Akhtar

ISLAMABAD, Oct 19: Pakistan continues to support efforts for a broad-based representative government in Afghanistan, but it was for the people of Afghanistan to devise its form, Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad told a press briefing here on Tuesday.

Asked about the UN Security Council resolution imposing sanctions against Afghanistan for allegedly harbouring terrorists, Mr Ahmad said Pakistan was not a party to the resolution and maintained that Islamabad had never accepted that the weapon of international sanctions could yield any useful results anywhere.

The foreign secretary said that unfortunately the Indian response was not positive to Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf's initiative in de-escalating military ten-

sion on borders and unconditionally resuming a sincere and meaningful dialogue between the two countries. He said Pakistan had always desired that the two countries should work towards resolving their outstanding problems, especially the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. With that in mind the chief executive had made the offer of unconditional and result-oriented dialogue with India.

He said the LoC could not be included in the initiative for de-escalation because it was "qualitatively different" from the national border. The LoC had always been volatile and it was not prudent to lower our own guard (without India agreeing to do so). He further said that it was now for India to create pre-requisite atmosphere for the dialogue.



Security on Pak-Afghan border tightened

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR—The authorities concerned have tightened security on Pak-Afghan border in all over the tribal belt, in order to stop defaulters from fleeing abroad.

In this connection, the administration of all seven tribal agencies as well as high ups of the Frontier Corps have been directed to ensure a thorough search of those crossing over the border between the two countries. Such type of security and checking is being witnessed for the first time on the border, one of the tribal trader informed.

He added that only those people are allowed to leave or enter Pakistan and Afghanistan who possess valid travelling or business documents.

Besides, the main check posts like Torkham at Khyber Agency, Nawapass at Bajaur, Angora Ada at South Waziristan and Ghulam Khan and Saidgai at North Waziristan Agencies have been handed over to various

scouts of the Frontier Corps. While the traditional Khasadar forces are extending help to them in implementation of such a plan aimed at flee of the doubtful and wanted elements. In fact, a large number of ones politicians, bureaucrats and their near and dear have disappeared.

The high ups of Frontier Corps in this connection are busy in holding meetings with political agents and other responsible authorities of all tribal agencies.

A meeting in this respect, Friday held at the Khyber House Peshawar which besides others was attended by Teepu Mohabat Khan Political Agent of Khyber Agency, Col. Tariq Khan, Commandant of the Khyber Rifles, Sahibzada Mohammad Anees Assistant Political Agent of Landi Kotal and others. Details of the meeting are yet to be ascertained but it was learnt that the participants had discussed in depth ways and means for further ensuring tight security on Pak-Afghan border at Torkham.

DAWN



NATION

20 OCT 1990

20 OCT 1990

Opposition backs UN sanctions against Taliban

KABUL, Oct 17: Afghanistan's opposition alliance on Sunday voiced its support for UN sanctions against the ruling Taliban movement, and called for further international pressure on the militia.

"We welcome and back the decision. Only international pressure can force the Taliban to pursue basic international principles and we want more such pressure," Mohammad Habeel, a spokesman for opposition alliance commander Ahmad Shah Masood, told Reuters.

The UN Security Council on Friday approved a US-sponsored resolution for imposing aviation and financial sanctions on the Taliban if it failed to hand over Saudi terrorism suspect Osama bin Laden for trial.

"Bin Laden is sponsoring world

terrorism and his men are actually fighting with the Taliban against our forces to turn Afghanistan into a breeding ground for Islamic fundamentalism worldwide," Habeel said.

The UN Security Council sanctions take effect on November 14 after a 30-day grace period unless bin Laden is handed over. The Saudi-born bin Laden is wanted on charges he plotted the 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Africa, in which more than 200 people died.

The Taliban have rejected the UN decision and have vowed not to hand over bin Laden under any pressure. The Taliban say the United Nations acts under US pressure and has no authority of its own.—Reuters

10 OCT 1999

DAWN

Pakistan accused of interfering in Afghan affairs

ISLAMABAD: The ambassador of the deposed Afghan president in Tajikistan said Pakistan is openly interfering in the affairs of Afghanistan adding no other neighbouring country is involved in such a blatant interference in that country, reports Radio Tehran.

Dr Syed Ibrahim Hekmat said the United Front has time and again told the Pakistan government that Islamabad cannot mediate owing to its meddling in that country.

He added Pakistan is being considered as a party in the Afghan conflict. He said Pakistan is not only supporting the Taliban rather is fighting along side the student militia against the forces of the Islamic government of Afghanistan.

The Afghan official termed the arrest of a number of Pakistani forces during different operations by the United Front forces in Northern Afghanistan as a proof of Pakistan's interference.—NNI

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

14 OCT 1999

NATION

01 OCT 1979

Taliban advance on Taloqan

KABUL (AFP) - Heavy fighting erupted across Afghanistan's northern front lines late Thursday as the opposition conceded the militia had made further advances, backed by a resumption of air raids.

Opposition United Front spokesman Mohammad Habeel said the opposition had shot down a Russian-made SU-22 fighter jet with a US-made Stinger surface-to-air missile during the aerial bombardments over the Taloqan, provincial capital of Takhar.

"The pilot and the plane fell on our side of the front lines. The pilot could not eject himself after the plane was shot down. Seventeen civilians also died and 25 others were wounded during the raids," he said.

Habeel said Taloqan remained a prime target for the militia who launched the second wave of their summer offensive on Saturday, and the Taliban had advanced on the city from its northern flank.

"The Taliban have made ground inside Takhar province by capturing Hazar Bagh district to the north of Taloqan," Habeel said.

A Taliban spokesman was unavailable for comment. Independent sources

have confirmed the fighting and that civilians and foreign aid workers evacuated Taloqan amid fears the opposition held city would fall to the Taliban.

"There has been a lot of activity going on. There was a lull this morning and bad weather had interrupted the air raids, but it appears the fighting is back on," one western observer said.

Taloqan is a strategic base for the opposition and controls the supply routes to bases held by the United Front in the south. Hazar Bagh lies 25 kilometres north of Taloqan.

The opposition said the United Front did not lose either city because of Taliban military pressure but withdrew because both towns were surrounded by desert and fighting in deserts was like 'committing suicide.'

"Sporadic fighting is going on at the moment. The Taliban have forced locals from these areas and have set their houses on fire," Habeel said.

After five years of civil war with the United Front, the militia has gained control over most of Afghanistan and imposed its own ultra-orthodox Islamic laws. It has vowed to win control of the northeast from the opposition.

Taliban lose jet as militia advances on Taloqan

KABUL: Heavy fighting erupted across Afghanistan's northern front lines late Thursday as the opposition conceded the Taliban had made further advances and killed 17 people and injured 25 others.

Opposition United Front spokesman Mohammad Habeel said the opposition had shot down a Russian-made SU-22 fighter jet with a US-made Stinger surface-to-air missile during the aerial bombardments over the Taloqan, provincial capital of Takhar.

"The pilot and the plane fell on our side of the front lines. The pilot could not eject himself after the plane was shot down. Seventeen civilians also died and 25 others were wounded during the raids," he said.

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"The Taliban have made ground inside Takhar province by capturing Hazar Bagh district to the north of Taloqan," Habeel said.

A Taliban spokesman was unavailable for comment. Independent sources have confirmed the fighting and that civilians and foreign aid workers evacuated Taloqan amid fears the opposition held city would fall to the Taliban.

"There has been a lot of activity going on. There was a lull Thursday morning and bad weather had interrupted the air raids, but it appears the fighting is back on," one western observer said. — AFP

Rivals repulse Taliban attack

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's opposition United Front said Friday it had repulsed an intense attack by the ruling Taliban militia after more than three hours of pitched battles.

Opposition spokesman Mohammad Habeel said the Taliban launched the strike at Khanabad in northern Afghanistan with 1,000 assault troops supported by heavy artillery and helicopter gun ships.

"The fighting lasted three hours, it was very intensive, but they were repulsed leaving behind 35 dead," Habeel said.

Unconfirmed reports said the Taliban's prime northern target, Taloqan, capital of Takhar province, had fallen to the militia. However Habeel denied the reports.

Khanabad lies on the main highway heading eastwards to Taloqan.

The provincial capital is a strategic base for the opposition and controls the supply routes to bases held by the United Front in the south.

The militia has advanced on the city from the north, west and southwest since launching the second wave of its summer campaign

last Saturday aimed at cutting supply routes heading south into the opposition-held Panjsher Valley.

Peshawar-based private Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said the militia had taken Takhar's district of Khawajaghar and launched an attack for a nearby key airstrip.

But the area around the airstrip had been heavily laid with landmines by the opposition troops, thwarting the Taliban advance, AIP said.

The agency, quoting unidentified sources, said Taloqan was still in the control of anti-Taliban forces.

The AIP report, which could not be independently confirmed, also said the militia had seized several important places in Takhar and neighbouring Kunduz province.

Some 19 troops from both sides had been killed and more than 40 injured in week-long fighting in the region, it said.

Independent sources say the Taliban have a total force of 6,000 troops in the area.

After five years of civil war with the United Front, the militia have gained control of more than 80 per cent of Afghanistan and imposed ultra-orthodox Islamic laws.

FRONTIER POST 02 OCT 1979

01 OCT 1979
THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

NATION 05 OCT 1998

Afghan opposition's counter-attack

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's United Front Monday launched a counter attack against the ruling Islamic Taliban militia in northern Takhar province, capturing three small districts, an opposition spokesman said.

'Our forces launched an attack against the Taliban in Hazar Bagh and captured the areas of Dasht-i-Gaza, Kahgadai and Ashti,' opposition spokesman Mohammad Habeel told AFP.

There was no independent confirmation of the claims and a Taliban spokesman was unavailable for comment.

The Taliban launched the second wave of its summer campaign 10 days ago aimed at seizing Taloqan, the provincial capital of Takhar, and the northern supply routes held by the United Front ahead of winter.

'The Taliban are still preparing for a big attack to reach Taloqan through the main Kunduz to Takhar road,' Habeel said.

'We are confident their attack would be beaten back,' he said.

Habeel said 32,000 people had been displaced by the recent fighting after the militia won control of districts to the north, west and south west of Taloqan.

The Taliban have fought a five-year civil war against the United Front and control most of Afghanistan.

On July 28 the militia launched its summer offensive aimed at ousting the opposition from the north east provinces but has only succeeded in pushing front lines north of Kabul back by 25 kilometres.

Opp claims shooting down of Taliban plane

KABUL (AFP) - Afghanistan's opposition United Front Wednesday claimed their troops had shot down another Taliban fighter jet with a newly-purchased air defence system in northern Afghanistan.

Opposition general, Sayed Hussain Anwari, declined to provide further details of the system or what type of jet was shot down, however, he said the wreckage was currently being recovered.

'The wreck of the plane has fallen on our side of the front line but the pilot ejected and has landed in the middle. Let's see whether we can capture him or if he escapes,' he told AFP.

A Taliban spokesman was unavailable for comment.

Last Thursday the United Front said they had shot down a Russian-made

SU-22 fighter jet with a highly sophisticated US-made Stinger heat seeking missile. The Taliban has a fleet of ageing MiGs and SUs which independent sources say number about 15. The militia has not lost a fighter jet since it captured Kabul in 1996. 'We hit the jet with a newly-purchased air-defence system,' Anwari said.

The United Front's air attack is extremely limited when compared with the militia which has used MiGs, SUs and attack helicopters during its summer offensive against the opposition in Afghanistan's northeast provinces.

Anwari said the Taliban launched fresh attacks Wednesday across the north where the militia had targeted Takhar province's capital, Taloqan and United Front-held supply routes.

Thousands flee heavy fighting in two Afghan provinces

KABUL: Bitter fighting in northern Afghanistan between the Taliban and opposition soldiers is driving thousands of people out of two northern provinces, an opposition spokesman said Friday.

People from both Takhar and Kunduz provinces are fleeing to nearby Badakhshan province said opposition spokesman Abdullah. Heavy bombing by Taliban jets also is blamed for the mass exodus from these provinces.

Abdullah said more than 60 civilians have been killed and hundreds more wounded in bombing raids by Taliban jet fighters in recent weeks. There was no immediate comment from the Taliban and it was impossible to independently verify the death toll.

The Taliban are trying to consolidate their hold over the entire country fighting their northern-based opposition led by ousted military chief Ahmed Shah Masud. Most of the fighting in recent weeks has been concentrated in Kunduz and Takhar province.

Taloqan, the provincial capital of Takhar and the seat of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government-in-exile has been heavily bombed in the last two weeks, said another opposition spokesman Mohammed Habeel. Rabbani has left the city and is living in Badakhshan. People who remain in Taloqan are living in underground bunkers, said Habeel in a satellite telephone interview from Taloqan. — AP

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL

02 OCT 1998

NATION

05 OCT 1998

DAWN

09 OCT 1999

Afghan opposition launches counter-attack

KABUL, Oct 8: Forces loyal to Afghanistan's opposition United Front on Friday fought heavy battles against Taliban forces in the north of the country, an opposition spokesman said.

United Front spokesman, Mohammad Habeel, said opposition troops had beaten back three Taliban strikes across front lines in Takhar province, killing 45 militia soldiers.

"Our attack captured the high grounds of Khwaja Ghar, including the airport, and the town itself is a no man's land," he said.

A Taliban spokesman was unavailable for comment. Independent confirmation was not immediately available.

The counter-attack followed 13 days of fighting in northern Takhar and Kunduz provinces where the ruling Taliban is attempting to seize opposition held supply routes before the winter.

"We lost three killed and nine wounded, the initiative is with us and Taliban troops seem war-weary. It is a war of attrition," Habeel said.

He said the United Front had advanced 15 kilometres inside Khwaja Ghar district, adding that the Taliban had not carried out any air raids over night.

For three years the Taliban's fleet of aging Russian-made MiGs and SU-22s have operated with virtual impunity across areas held by the opposition.—AFP

Afghan opposition launches counter attack in north

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For three years the Taliban's fleet of ageing Russian-made MiGs and SU-22s have operated with virtual impunity across areas held by the opposition.

However, the United Front says it has shot down two SUs in the past eight days with highly-sophisticated US-made Stinger missiles.

The Taliban has fought a five-year civil war against the United Front and controls most of Afghanistan where it has imposed its ultra-orthodox version of Islamic Sharia law.

Taliban capture Takhar province district

PESHAWAR, Oct 1: Taliban militia on Friday wrested control of the district of Khwajaghaar from the opposition in Takhar province after a week of fighting, reports said.

The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) agency reported that 19 people were killed and around 40 wounded in the fighting.

Clashes between troops loyal to opposition commander Ahmed Shah Masood and Taliban forces were continuing in the nearby Bangi frontline, AIP said.

The United Front said on Friday it had repulsed an intensive attack by the ruling Taliban after more than three hours of pitched battles fought early this morning.

Opposition spokesman said the Taliban launched the strike at Khanabad in northern Afghanistan with 1,000 assault troops supported by heavy artillery and helicopter gun ships. "The fighting lasted three hours, it was very intensive, but they were repulsed leaving behind 35 dead," Habeel said.—Agencies

Opposition attacks into Taliban territory

KABUL (AFP) - The United Front opposition said Saturday it had launched an attack in north Afghanistan and advanced 15 kilometres into Taliban-held territory.

United Front spokesman Mohammad Habeel said the operation was launched at Pul-i-Khumri in Baghlan province with forces loyal to opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood seizing the high ground around the Kelagai desert. "From there, heavy machine gun fire can threaten the main highway linking Kabul with the northern capital Mazar-i-Sharif," he said.

A Taliban spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Masood launched a counter-offensive against the ruling Taliban on Friday aimed at retaking ground lost to the militia since it launched its northern campaign two weeks ago.

The Taliban's northern operations are aimed at cutting Masood's northern supply lines before winter sets in.

"We also captured the artillery regiment of the Taliban's 80th division and other hilltops overlooking the Kelagai area," Habeel said. "This is important as it is deep inside enemy territory and will force the Taliban to deploy troops from other front lines," he said.

Explosion kills 7 Taliban soldiers

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - At least seven Taliban soldiers were killed Saturday when an explosion blew up a truck at a Taliban ammunition dump in northern Afghanistan, a private Afghan news service reported.

More than a dozen other Taliban troops and several civilians were also injured by the blast at Qulu-i-Ziney near the northern provincial capital of Mazar-i-Sharif, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said. The explosion occurred as ammunition and arms were being loaded onto the truck, the agency said.

The blast caused a fire which took two hours to control, the agency said, adding a series of smaller explosions also occurred at the site.

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Seven Taliban die in Mazar-i-Sharif explosions

PESHAWAR, Oct 9: At least seven of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia were killed on Saturday in a series of explosions near the northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

The incident took place in the Kala-i-Zainey area, some six kilometres west of Mazar-i-Sharif, the former stronghold of the anti-Taliban alliance, when the militia members were loading ammunition in a vehicle.

AIP said the Taliban militia, which captured the city from opposition forces in August last year, maintains a small depot of weapons in the area. More than a dozen people including civilians were injured in the blasts, the report said.

AIP said a huge fire erupted after several small and big explosions. Taliban firefighters put out the flames after about two hours.

Taliban officials confirmed the incident but ruled out the possibility of a subversive act. The unnamed Taliban officials attributed the explosions to the careless handling of ammunition during loading.

ATTACK: The United Front opposition said on Saturday it had launched an attack in north

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Anti-Taliban troops claim significant gains

KABUL (AFP) - The Afghan opposition said Tuesday that troops loyal to anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Masood had made significant gains in a major counter-attack overnight in Kunduz province.

Opposition spokesman Mohammad Habeel said Masood forces had recaptured the districts of Dasht-i-Archi and Imam Saheb and Sher Khan Bandar township in the northern province bordering Tajikistan.

He said the Taliban Islamic militia had now been pushed back to areas from where they started their autumn offensive against Masood a month ago.

Opposition troops had also captured Taliban-held parts of the major towns of Hazarbagh and Khujah Ghar in Takhar province, 400 kilometers north of here, the spokesman said.

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